ARMENIANS, KOORDS, AND TURKS.

BY

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"A man is killed in Paris: it is a murder. The throats of fifty thousand people are cut in the East, and it is a question."—VICTOR HUGO.

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CHAPTER I.

ARMENIAN ASPIRATIONS.

Among all the inhabitants of Trans-Caucasia, the Armenians are most useful to the Russians, as well as the most faithful and obedient to their rule. A great part of the wealth and trade of the country is in their hands; and consequently it is hoped that their Russification will be a great advantage to the Government of St. Petersburg.

The laws of conscription have made them soldiers; and as they are robust, hardy, and temperate, they form no mean addition to the Caucasian army; for after a little drill and discipline, it has been proved that they can shoot, and ride, and fight, as well as their countrymen

in Turkey—with no other opening for their talents—can swindle, lie, and cheat (so the Turks say) the very devil himself.

I have heard the autonomy of the Armenians agitated in a company of men composed of that nation; and some years ago, a kind of debating society, similarly constituted, was formed at Constantinople to discuss that impossible question. The notion was hardly started before it was abandoned as a Eutopia only worthy of the attention of dreamers; and indeed, a similar government for the Germans living in London would not be one whit more reasonable.

The Turks and the Armenians live mixed up together in the same towns, in the same villages, and in the same streets; and although there are places, and even districts, inhabited exclusively by both one and the other,—they are as a rule, only to be found in secluded parts of the country.

Wherever the Armenians live alone, they are protected by a few Turkish officials or mounted policemen, who, according to all ac-

counts, treat the people almost as if they belonged to them.

If one of them falls in love with a handsome girl, he is allowed to convert her to the Mahommedan faith; and thus, by means of religion, oppression of the worst and most hateful kind is encouraged, and lubricity supported.

In places where the Armenians reside by themselves, nothing in the world would be simpler or more easy than to grant them that parochial self-government, which their own institutions would enable them to carry out in a manner entirely satisfactory, and which is even now allowed them by the Turks in all matters of a purely Armenian nature, when a Mussulman is not in any way concerned.

This extension of liberty, or rather of natural right, would certainly in the first instance only affect unimportant places and small villages—quite unessential from a commercial point of view—but it would never attract such an influx of Armenians from other parts of the country,

as to form germs or nurseries of little free communities which, according to the expectations of some people, might afterwards grow large.

The Turks will surely grant any extension of Armenian liberties on paper.

"When I go to a country," says Montesquieu, "I do not try to find out if there are good laws there; but if those which exist are carried out, for there are good laws everywhere."

Elaborately written constitutions are not what the Armenians want, because they know perfectly well that institutions copied from European models are altogether inapplicable to the moral and material conditions of their existence.

They desire the freedom given to them by the Turks, with the protection which they enjoy under the Russians.

It is unlikely that the liberties, granted to the Armenians in the recently concocted Turkish constitution, will ever be put into force; because those unhappy people are so cowed and

overcome with terror when in the presence of the dominant race,—which has looked down upon them for centuries, and for which at the bottom of their hearts, and notwithstanding their profound dislike, they regard as gentlemen altogether superior to themselves,—that in any public or deliberative assembly their voices would hush before the scowls of a Koord or of an Osmanli.

They are quite aware how easy a matter is the interpretation of rules; how simply the majority can put down a timorous minority; and they are, being an educated, learned, and often a well-read people,—not altogether ignorant of the significance of the fable of the wolf and the lamb.

They know full well that, unless protected by a really powerful executive, altogether independent of those fanatical and religious factions objecting to any kind of reform,—every scheme for their amelioration is altogether hopeless.

This is why they look to Russia for support; and, unless the English protectorate of Asia Minor can offer them a defence analogous to

the protection under which they are sheltered by the Muscovites,—the constitution of Midhat, the convention with Great Britain, or the occupation of Cyprus, are matters of the most perfect and supreme indifference to the Armenians; who feel that, after unparalleled vicissitudes, the dispersed nation has at length arrived at a crisis in its fate.

They think that the hour of their deliverance is at hand; and, while they watch attentively the course of events, their judgment is suspended between a belief in Russia or England as the political Messiah.

Longing for that tolerance, which they are well aware gives both social equality and religious freedom wherever the British power is supreme,—they are fully sensible of the vital interest of England in supporting the Turkish power on the Bosphorus and in Asia Minor.

Although believing with a lively faith in our good intentions, they disbelieve in our ability to carry them out.

The calculations of diplomacy may endeavour

to suppress the aspirations of the Armenian nation; but constant intercourse with Europe, where several colleges educate each year great numbers of Armenian youths who form friendships among the rising generations of those countries in which they are brought up,—increases gradually the knowledge that men now have of that interesting nation and its inhabitants.

That knowledge will certainly cause every generous mind to feel a sympathy for the position in which men so highly gifted, and women so beautiful, are placed; and as years go on, and as Europeans become more and more intimately acquainted with these despised and little-known people, liberal opinion will feel for their trouble, and perhaps, with that violence and folly usually distinguishing its action, endeavour to solve the question by blindly playing into the hands of Russia.

There is hardly a country in Europe in which Armenians are not to be found; and American missionaries, French Lazzarists, Italian Mechtarists, and Protestants from Basle—with a view

to obtaining a spiritual hold on the inhabitants—have established congregations throughout the country.

The North American missionaries are highly paid.

The Turks, taking them for pious fools who abandoned their own country in a fit of madness, have long since ceased to believe that any political intentions are hidden under a cloak of religion; so they enjoy complete liberty of action, and are regarded with that consideration which must ever be commanded by independence and wealth.

These countries are, however, not to be improved by the introduction of new creeds; for, although much has been said, and written, and accepted about the civilising influences of Christianity—it appears that since the great French Revolution more has been effected towards the cultivation and freedom of Europe by an extension of feelings of humanity and by principles of morality, honour, and patriotism, than has ever been brought about by the teaching of religion.

Modern ideas have sprung, not from the Gospel taken literally—but from the expansion given to it by broad interpretation and free-thought.

A few hundred years ago, or even much less, the Christian religion in Europe was no more than a regular idolatry, entirely manipulated so as to further the ambition of the Popes, as well as to favour the most criminal projects; and although the Mussulman faith, a purely political institution, is at the present time being worked in Turkey by a clique whose selfishness hates every notion of reform—I can see no reason why, under a strong government, the creed of Mahommed cannot, with equal success, be gradually brought into a closer accordance with modern ideas.

I am quite aware of the pretended "eternity" of the Koran, as well as all those stock arguments which seem to prove that Mahommedanism does not admit of any modification; but other texts taken from that extraordinary book, as well as important decisions of the Turkish Cadis, appear to allow of as liberal interpreta-

tions as have, in recent years, been successfully applied to passages in our own Bible from which very opposite conclusions have been deduced by the fanaticism and bigotry of less enlightened times.

The Turkish peasantry possess some of the highest and greatest qualities of which men, altogether ignorant and uncultivated, are capable.

It is probable that among no people on the face of the earth are such dignified obedience, respect, and deference towards superiors, such sobriety, honesty, and docility to be found.

The soldier,—educated at his mother's knee and during childhood to bow before authority, and to respect every officer of the government with that alacrity expected from all men in a despotic state,—carries with him to the army a disposition willing to brook every insult and ill-treatment rather than express, even by a sour or vindictive look, the least impatience or dissatisfaction with the tyranny of his superiors.

In this surprising subordination consists the extraordinary vitality of the Turkish nation; for, however grossly the natural rights of the people have been invaded, and however cruelly they have been robbed, tortured, or ill-used, they ever bear without a murmur the caprices or the cruelties of the man in place.

Although the Mussulman religion is essentially Republican, this exaggerated deference to authority has become so interwoven with its teaching and precepts,—that every pious Turk firmly believes that he is only obeying the commands of God when blindly grovelling to superiors, whose extreme arrogance and total want of thought or consideration for men whom they command, make the patience of those submitted to them a still more wonderful and interesting contemplation.

Every good quality of the poor Turkish peasant is poisoned by his extreme bigotry; and the clique of Pashas governing the country, however stupid and lethargic they may be to the real interests of their nation, are always keenly alive to everything touching

their own immediate benefit; and know very well how easily all this piety, or prejudice, or fanaticism can be worked up so as to prevent any kind of reform tending to curtail their power or authority.

It is the object and interest of this clique to let things remain as they are.

Their views on that head at least, though for very different reasons, are exactly identical with those of the Russians.

I have heard it remarked even by Armenians, that the Muscovites, having got all they want for the moment, will, by means of every kind of intrigue and underhand dealing, instil a deep jealousy into the minds of the Turks; lay great stress on the dangers by which they are surrounded; and eventually succeed in persuading them that every concession granted to the demands of England is only another step towards a regular annexation.

Before again coming to the rescue of the Armenians, the wily Muscovites will go through a short transmogrification, and play the farce of protecting the Turks for a few years.

The jealousy of the Turks—as well as the sympathy felt by the great mass of pious Russian peasants for their Christian brethren in the East—can be easily worked at the pleasure of men clever or unscrupulous enough to set them in motion, according to never-failing plans.

Nothing is more easy than to excite the patriotism of the Ottomans, provided the religious question is mixed up in the quarrel; and no sooner is a holy war proclaimed than, according to the custom of the country, we hear of nothing but Christians having their throats cut in different parts of the empire.

All such troubles are caused by Muscovite anxiety about the latter, and the nearest members of the persuasion, who can be seized, are dealt with in a manner equally disgusting and summary.

The sympathies of liberal Europe, and nowhere more than in England, are raised against the Turks; and with that unreasoning and mischievous clamour so appallingly displayed a very short time ago by our own atrocity meetings in London and elsewhere—the action of diplomacy

is rendered nugatory for the prevention of Russian schemes.

The foreign policy of the Government—instead of being directed with that calmness, determination, and forethought so necessary for the display of clear ideas and fixed principles, with regard to our vital interests in the East—becomes (as a necessary consequence of trying to please people who know not their own minds, and who cry out for action which a few weeks or months previously they decried) vacillating, apparently timorous, and, in the eyes of orientals incapable of understanding the influences exercised by party questions—altogether contemptible and mean.

Nobody appreciates more keenly than the Russian Foreign Office the weakening effects on the English Government of such absurd and contemptible squabbles; but the celerity with which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg drew back from their pretentions to, or even interference with Afghanistan, proves that England, feeling clearly and speaking strongly to the world, through her representatives at St. Stephen's,

must ever be hearkened to with deference and respect.

It is certainly very difficult for an European to force his mind into a chain of thought similar to that of a good and pious Turk; and it is only by means of very patient analogies, unhampered by those natural prejudices besetting each step of the process, that he can ever hope to work himself, even for a few moments, into the same mental condition.

To me it appears only the natural and unavoidable effect of causes operating for centuries —that the Turks should hate the Christians.

I feel quite convinced were I a subject of the Sublime Porte, filled with that piety and strong religious sentiment, without doubt animating great numbers of Osmanlis, that I should look upon every Christian, no matter what his Church or country, with feelings of mistrust and suspicion—disgusting indeed to those who are really well-wishers of Turkey, but, nevertheless, quite palpable to men sharp enough to see through the practised art, with which in the East, personal feelings are disguised.

Such morose, and it may be often unworthy sentiments, are always a latent power constantly at the disposition of men whose profound knowledge of the oriental character enables them to stir up and work for their own purposes, a force so ready to and pliable in their hands.

It is for this reason that a too hasty or ill-considered interference in the affairs of Turkey may, at any moment, cause throughout the whole country a violent burst of fanaticism, which, of all other things, would be most pleasing and satisfactory to the Russian diplomatic mind.

On the other hand, the fanaticism of the Russian peasant is just as lively as that of the Turks. Those who suppose that the great national feeling of Russia in favour of the oppressed Christians of Turkey is no more than a pretended sentiment, borrowed or laid aside according to the exigencies of diplomacy, are, in my humble opinion at least, quite as much in error as those who believe that the Armenians, so far from hailing the invading Muscovite army as deliverers, looked upon them with the

same fear and hatred as did the Osmanlis themselves.

It appears palpable enough that, ever since the time of the Crusades, the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem has been used for the purpose of fostering carefully-concealed, but nevertheless often cunningly-devised schemes on Constantinople or on Asia Minor.

Wherever any projects of that kind can be promoted, it may be regarded as quite certain that the ever-intriguing Russians will undoubtedly not be behindhand.

Artists, tourists, travellers, and men of science go in great numbers to the Holy Land from the civilised countries of the West; but, except from Russia, no Europeans who could, strictly speaking, come under the denomination of pilgrims, are ever to be met with there.

The Government of St. Petersburg encourages these religious expeditions for political reasons.

The Russian peasant is described as a very devout person by those who admire him; and as a very superstitious savage by those who are

animated by unfriendly feelings towards his nation.

Whether devout, or whether superstitious, the effect of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem causes him to return home with a feeling of intense hatred for the Turks.

Several years ago, notions of piety or curiosity induced me, during a leave of absence from my regiment, to visit Jerusalem; and as the remarks I then wrote seem to bear on my present subject, I may perhaps be allowed to quote them:

"Most of the pilgrims are Russians, who do not come here from curiosity, or from a love of change, but from those simple and pious inspirations which make them hope that at least once in their lives they may grieve upon the places where their Saviour suffered. Their poverty can ill spare the expenses of such a pilgrimage; but for years and years the stout peasant on the plains of the Ukraine will jealously horde his little savings in a dirty leather bag: and when he has saved enough to defray the bare cost of his journey, will cheerfully undergo the greatest hardships and privations, in order to weep upon

the Mount of Calvary, or in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was crowds of such people who interested me along the road, and who were inspired with fresh strength when we warned them of the proximity of the Mountain of Zion. Although fainting from fatigue and often from hunger, under the rays of a Syrian sun, the fervent Muscovites had no other clothes than the costume of their northern climate; but their large jack-boots, heavy garments, and sheep-skin coats did not slacken the diligence of their toilsome journey. Nothing can damp the zeal of felt religion; and, like the Crusaders of old, these hardy bigots, who dragged themselves over the rocks with the help of long staffs, would have been glad to die fighting for Christ and their religion that very day, if the means of doing so were only pointed out to them. Haggard and weary peasant women, with long sticks in their hands, were suffering great spiritual pleasure and great bodily pain under the burning sun; but many of the simple-minded and noble-looking old men, who sat panting on the hot rocks at the side of the way, looked as if

their strength had been too much taxed, and as if they could only reach the Holy Sepulchre to lie down there and die."

It was with such laudable sentiments as these, that the Crusaders set out from their native countries on the road to Jerusalem.

At the bidding of leaders, who knew how to play on the fury of religious bigotry as well as do the Muscovites at the present day—they turned their arms on and took possession of Constantinople.

In a manner exactly similar, the wrath of the whole Russian nation can at any moment be stirred up against the persecutors and oppressors of the religion of Christ.

Every serious man is quite convinced that Constantinople was the goal of Russian ambition. The Christians of Turkey are the fulcrum on which to place the lever of what is, I confidently affirm, a tremendous power when handled by a knowledge of human nature acting on extreme and heartfelt piety, fanaticism, and ignorance.

"We Slavonians," says a Slavish author,

"owe our Western brethren a warning of the utmost moment. The man of the West is forgetful of the North of Europe and of Asia, the home of plundering and exterminating nations. Let no man believe that these nations have ceased to exist. They still continue there, like a big cloud, with tempests only awaiting the signal from above to dart down from the table-lands of Central Asia. Let no one suppose that the spirit of Attila, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Suvarof, the terrible scourges of humanity, is extinct. Those lands, those men, and that spirit, are still there, to keep civilisation alive, and to warn it of the fact that it is not time for the West to turn its swords into ploughshares, or its barracks into charitable institutions."

All along the road which leads from Jaffa up to Jerusalem, the Russian pilgrims, often following one of their dirty and unshorn Popes, experience the same contemptuous treatment which every European traveller, unless he is rich enough to be attended by a certain suite of Turks,—undergoes in many parts of the Ottoman Empire.

Passing Mussulman wayfarers scowl at them, or call them offensive names.

On their arrival at Jerusalem, they are associated with, and, by means of priests, make acquaintance with, those down-trodden subjects of the Porte, who hail them as brothers, and entertain them with, in all probability, very exaggerated tales of the persecutions they suffer for their love of Christ and His holy religion.

Then the ears of these pious people tingle with rage ; and on their return home they carry with them a fresh addition to that eternal hatred by means of which public opinion in Russia is leavened, and sympathies with the Christians of Turkey kept up.

The French or English traveller who visits the ugly Garden of Gethsemane, the place of the nativity at Bethlehem, or even the Holy Sepulchre itself, looks at them and goes away again.

The poor Russian falls on the ground, kisses with extreme fervour and reverence those sacred places, and filling either a bag or his pockets

full of dirt, guards it as a treasure worth its weight in gold.

The tears on his cheeks, his long hair, dirty face, and costume so unsuitable to the climate, as well as so repulsive to the taste of Orientals, cause his (in their eyes) devilish appearance to be saluted with jeers and laughter; and it is certain that the contempt of the Turks, who go as spectators to those orgies which at certain seasons are enacted near the sepulchre of Christ,—is, in consequence of such whimsical and fantastic ceremonies, greatly increased.

At the first view of Jerusalem, many of the pilgrims burst into tears; but no sooner have they arrived at the Holy Sepulchre, than, feeling that the great object of their lives has been fulfilled, and that they have found Christ, they, in the joy and delight of their rough and uncultivated natures, give vent to an exuberance of mirth and riot most shocking when enacted within the walls of a church.

Raising their voices to the highest pitch, they bellow with extreme violence—"Here He

is! Here He is!" and then taking each other by the shoulders, and according to the account of Maundrel, often conducting themselves in a manner equally shameless and disgusting, perform most indecent and grotesque frolics in the vicinity of a spot calculated, one would suppose, above all others on the face of the earth, to produce feelings of the utmost melancholy, respect, and awe.

To the feelings of a Turk, or indeed to those of any rational and reasonable man, nothing can be more execrable and odious than scenes so well calculated to bring the Christian religion into that contempt with which it is ever regarded by the Mussulmans.

The undying hatred existing between these hostile sects is constantly fed by pilgrimages to Jerusalem, a town as sacred according to the Mahommedan doctrines, as it is according to those of both the Eastern and Western Churches.

So great was the intolerance of the Turks, and so fierce their animosity against Christians of all sects and denominations, that, until of late

years, no person professing that persuasion was allowed inside the walls of Nablous.

Miss Martineau remarks, that on her passage through that miserable town, no matter in which direction they looked, "the people were grinning, thrusting out their tongues and pretending to spit."

"In Palestine," says Dr. Aiton, "we enjoyed the distinction of being stoned and hooted by a rabble of Mahommedans at our heels, merely because we were Haji, that is pilgrims."

It is not distinguished Europeans, provided with a firman bearing the Sultan's seal, and attended by a retinue, more or less numerous, of Turkish guards, — who experience similar or even worse annoyances.

On the contrary, these fine gentlemen, after a long journey in either European or Asiatic Turkey, return home with a conviction that nothing in the world can be more friendly than the intercourse of the Christian and the Turk.

There can be no doubt that the impressions derived from what comes actually under their

observation, is such as would tend to spread and reproduce ideas, although equally probable and plausible,—nevertheless far from being in accordance with reality.

So extraordinary is the obedience to authority grafted by the education of centuries on the Turkish mind, that every twinkle of the official eye, and every wrinkle in the official smile, take place in exact accordance with the wording of the firman—that talisman by which the ice of fanatical hatred is melted, and the coldness of contempt turned into compliments equally hollow and perceptible.

It is a physiognomical study, worthy of the attention of Lavater, to watch gravely the wonderful alterations in the features of a surly Turk as he slowly reads a firman. He turns his eyes backwards and forwards from the paper on which that document is written, to the face of the traveller who is mentioned therein; and it is amusing to note the wonderful alterations of bearing and manner consequent on the alternate study of both.

The most truculent bear becomes suddenly a

polished courtier, the expressions of whose tongue breathe only sentiments of kindness and respect; but it is the firman, and not the man, which causes such agreeable outbursts of forced politeness.

The poor Russian pilgrim is not provided with this useful document. He is treated roughly and insultingly. In company with Greek and Armenian Christians, who excite his theological hatred by means of touching stories of the insults offered to the religion of Christ by the misbelieving pig, as (in a whisper) they describe the Turks,—every walk round all those sacred places in the vicinity of Jerusalem make him feel more and more that Mussulman insolence which, irritating and humiliating each step, causes him to bring home a stock of animosity, very infectious to the minds of neighbours listening to simple stories about the condition of their co-religionists under the government of the Mahommedans in Palestine.

As a natural result, it is quite certain that every peasant in Russia entertains a lively feeling of sympathy for the unfortunate Christians

in Turkey; and diplomacy, whenever it is found suitable, directs that national sentiment in a manner most useful for the attainment of certain political ends, which, notwithstanding the pious tones of its well-worded and plausible notes, have nothing in the world to do with the religious aspect of this eternal question.

In imitation of the Crusaders of old, the Government of St. Petersburg acts according to deeply-laid and secret schemes for its own aggrandisement. At the same time, every attack on Turkey is followed by the sympathies of the whole population of Russia, which believes it a good and holy work most acceptable and pleasing to Almighty God.

Like certain animals who, in their natural state, have a fierce and cruel antipathy for each other, it appears to be a law of nature, that, unless controlled and kept in order by a strong and fearless Government, the Christian and the Turk must ever be animated with mutual feelings of extreme hatred, contempt, and animosity.

The least provocation, or even opportunity,

causes them to break out into every kind of cruelty and atrocity.

The Christians are in no way inferior to the Turks in the arts of butchery, torture and murder; and it seems that whichever of the two opposite sects feels itself for the moment strong enough,—wreaks its vengeance on the other.

"After a slight opposition," says the story of Wassily Iguroff, related by his grandson to Dr. Wagner, "all were cut down: the infant in the womb was not spared, and the bald heads stuck on the points of the lances, satisfied the Cossack revenge."

These are adventures which might be multiplied from the records, if such documents were preserved, or even compiled, of both sides; and it is lack of strength or opportunity which alone prevents their daily occurrence.

The pilgrimages to Jerusalem, by bringing the Christians of Turkey into close relationship, cemented by religious ties, with bands of Russian peasants; and the protection received by the Armenians the instant they escape across the

frontier,—added to the undying hatred of the Christian for the Turk, will ever,—till some excellent reason is given to them for not doing so,—cause the Rayah to look to the Muscovite for support.

Of all countries in the East, Armenia is the one which has attracted the least attention; but with the exception of Haxthausen, who devotes several pages of his valuable work to the Russian part of that country,—and recently, of Mr. Bryce,—I am not aware of any authors who have attempted to depict the national life or the customs and aspirations of its people.

Notwithstanding its richness in native histories, the ancient state of Armenia is almost unknown to the learned and curious of Europe. Nevertheless, the attention of the West will by degrees be turned towards it; and wheu its literature is studied, and the comparative geography of the country understood,—a profound feeling of sympathy will be awakened in the mind of the Christian; of interest in that of the antiquarian; and at last, even

the coldness of diplomacy will be unable to smother sentiments of real pity for the fallen condition of that gifted and unhappy race.

CHAPTER II.

TRAVELLING IN ARMENIA.

Mr. Hamilton's Idea of an Independent Armenia.—The Road into the Interior. — Superb Views. — Healthy Climate. — Dirt. — An Armenian Arcadia. — Ghumish Hana.—Ancient Ruins.—The Account given of them by a Spanish Ambassador nearly five hundred years ago.—Treatment of Armenians at that time.—Xenophon.—Retreat of the Ten Thousand Greeks through this Valley.—Intoxicating Honey. —Paskievitch stopped here in 1828. — Description of a Hurricane. — A Persian Caravan forcing through the Snow.—Docile Horses.—Dangers.—Scenery resembles Tyrol.—Silver Mines of Ghumish Hana.

CHAPTER II.

TRAVELLING IN ARMENIA.

"EVERY day's experience"—says William Hamilton, secretary to the Geographical Society, who travelled in Armenia and throughout the whole of Asiatic Turkey upwards of forty years ago—"confirmed me in the idea that it would be far preferable for humanity, civilisation, and commerce, if the Russians were in possession of this country instead of the Turks. That, however, is out of the question; the other European powers would never consent to such an aggrandisement on the part of Russia.

"An intermediate Armenian kingdom might be formed between Mahommedanism and the

Europeans; their Christian religion and Asiatic manners point out the Armenians as admirably adapted for such a position. This kingdom would include Armenia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Paphlagonia, Galatia, Phrygia; and, under its commercial energy and perseverance, the great resources of Asia Minor would soon be developed and rendered serviceable to mankind."

This notion is, however, equally out of the question; and nobody is more aware of such a palpable and self-evident fact than the Armenians themselves.

The great road, leading from the sea-coast at Trebizonde to Erzerum, is one of the best in Turkey. It was planned and made by French engineers.

Although the rugged nature of the country through which it passes, as well as the heavy snowfalls often obstructing it during the winter months, throw many impediments in the way of travellers—its course has been so well chosen, that except for a few days at a time, and then only when the weather is uncommonly boisterous—it is always available as a means of com-

munication between the many towns and villages in whose neighbourhood it passes.

It is marked with stones, denoting nautical or geographical miles; and as a horseman usually travels three of these measurements in an hour—the distance in time is also indicated on every third post.

From the town of Trebizonde to the top of the Zigana mountain is a distance of thirty-five miles; and the road, generally shaded by a dense forest of pines, follows a succession of steep inclines overlooking a roaring stream.

Picturesquely built and situated houses, standing quite alone among these vast solitudes, often appear in the distance as though they were suspended among the trees.

Here and there the milky foam of a splashing cataract glides from a great altitude upon the sombre rocks below.

The scenery, without being so grand, is perhaps, in consequence of the frequent embellishment of waterfalls pouring among and half hidden by dark green foliage,—more beautiful than many popular parts of Switzerland.

There is no doubt that it is the distance, added to the expense and loss of time necessary for excursions to these pleasantly situated places, which causes them to be so little known to the travelling Englishman.

The country is one of the healthiest in the world; and as the food of the people consists entirely of bread, like dough, milk and vegetables,—the most dyspeptic-stricken and ill-humoured drunkard or glutton would find more benefit from six weeks' residence among them, than from the waters of Baden, Homburg, or Carlsbad, or than from all the medicines of every apothecary's shop in London.

Here the traveller, instead of on a French mattress in the conventional Grand Hotel, sleeps with his munching horses or in the open air; but whether he chooses the warmth of the animals near his straw, or the pure and chilly atmosphere outside, the inhalations, although at first very irritating to a long-standing cough or other pulmonary affection,—are so wholesome, strengthening, and invigorating, that the most obstinate chest complaints are completely

cured in a few days, unless the patient dies.

The effects of the cold air make men very drowsy.

The crawling of insects from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, is so lethargic, and like the action of shampooing, so soothing to the limbs of the weary traveller, that the instant the fleas have covered his body in as great a multitude as the ants on an ant-heap—he, with a smile of peace and satisfaction on his face, drops gently into profound and refreshing slumbers.

An English consul, after a long residence in Armenia, having retired to his native country on a pension, had become so accustomed to the fleas that he was unable to sleep without them; and his housemaid always carried a snuff-box full upstairs and put them into his bed with the warming-pan.

People who live long in these countries contract, without doubt, the most extraordinary tastes and habits.

It can, however, only be a very superficial

knowledge of the inhabitants which supposes that the Armenians are so eccentric—whatever prejudices they may have about fleas—as to prefer the Turkish blood-sucker to the Russian bear.

From the summit of the pass, on the top of the Zigana, the view is equally grand and beautiful.

By means of deep cuttings, the road winds along the side of the savage and rugged mountain; wanders doubtfully into the valley far down below; and is lost underneath an old castle perched on the end of a wild pinnacle of rugged and beetling rocks.

A passage, seeming in the distance like a crack or rent in the great cliff-side, is the entrance to the Valley of Ghumish Hana, where the most luscious fruit and sweet-smelling flowers flourish under the shade of variegated trees, and within hearing of the murmurs of refreshing streams.

The balconies of its picturesque and comfortable houses overlook delightful gardens, whose copious produce is famous for

delicacy and flavour throughout the whole of Turkey.

Secluded, sheltered, and protected by precipices of appalling altitudes and fantastic shapes, the Valley of Ghumish Hana, resounding with the sound of pipes and lutes, appears the natural home of health and joy; and the ruddy faces of smiling children dabbling in neighbouring brooks, prove that doctors, with their poisonous and expensive physic, do not plunder here.

The enthusiastic admirer of nature in all its savage grandeur may feel the most sublime emotions; but it is the painter alone who can convey those impressions to the minds of others.

The extraordinary town of Ghumish Hana—chiefly inhabited by Greeks, whose forefathers, deserting from the army of Xenophon, are believed to have chosen this position as inaccessible to the attacks of the barbarians—is constructed along both sides of a deep and awful chasm, at a distance of about three miles from the road.

When the astonished beholder comes in sight of its comfortable houses, stately mosques, and solid cathedral, terraced one above the other on ledges hollowed from the living rock, and standing boldly out of the very face of the precipice, —a very easy stretch of imagination might cause him to believe that he was gazing upon a shelf full of china ornaments, hanging from the sky, glittering in the sun, and very likely to be blown down by a little gust of wind.

Classical and mediæval ruins, often of great extent as well as of massive structure, and generally perched in such very elevated positions that all approach to them seems impossible,—beautify nearly every turn among these pleasant scenes.

The remnants of an impregnable castle frown down from a perpendicular precipice a thousand feet high.

Further on, but so confounded among the jagged outline of the black rocks, that a traveller might very possibly pass by without observing them,—walls, towers, turrets, and battlements threaten to fall straight down from

a terrific altitude upon the heads of men walking on the road below.

It is a proof of the ignorance concerning these countries on the part of even very well-informed Europeans, that nearly all ruins in Armenia are invariably attributed by them, as well as by the natives, to the Genoese, who do not appear to have ever established themselves in the interior.

The history of those daring and adventurous merchants and navigators, or of their colonies on the shores of the Black Sea, has never been published. There can, however, not be the least doubt that the archives of Genoa contain mines of information on that most interesting subject, which, if properly worked, would throw a gleam of light into the darkness by which the state of these countries, at the period of the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, is at present totally obscured.

Although the castle alluded to in the preceding paragraph is mentioned by several authors as Genoese, there is an excellent description of it given by Ruy Gonzalez de

Clavijo, Ambassador in the year 1403 to Timour the Tartar, from Leon the third, King of Castile.

The owner of the castle at the entrance of the pass was a Greek named Arbosita, while that at the other side belonged to one Cabasica, also a Greek, and at war with the Turks; but nowhere, except on the sea-coast, does the Ambassador ever mention a stronghold in the interior belonging to the Genoese.

It appears from this most interesting book, that, when its author travelled along the road between Trebizonde and Erzingian,—the country was in such a state of complete anarchy and disorder that the lord of every small territory, or the master of every castle, levied black-mail on all travellers without distinction.

"This castle," says the ambassador, "always contains thieves and bad men, and the lord of it is also a thief."

Very wary and suspicious of strangers, as well as fearful of treachery,—this lord, or thief (for at that time they appear to have been synonymous terms), would not let the Ambassador come up to see him; but he came

down with a strong guard to meet the travellers in the valley, where, assuring His Excellency that he had no means of livelihood except such as he gained by extorting money from the by-passers,—he robbed him of a considerable sum.

It was in vain that the Spaniards produced a firman from Timour himself—none of these "lords, who were also thieves," paid the least respect to it; but obliging Gonzalez to satisfy their demands, added no doubt a heavy item to that nobleman's travelling expenses.

It is certain that the customs and mode of existence among the inhabitants of these remote countries have not changed to any great degree for several hundred years.

The terror inspired by the arrival of a party of Turks in a Christian village has been described with remarkable accuracy by Mr. Barclay in his work on Bulgaria, where having passed several years of his life, he had many opportunities of observing the nature of the intercourse between such travellers and the inhabitants of the place.

The Turk in Bulgaria, and the Zagatay or Tartar in Armenia, as well as the Osmanli, his descendant by whom he is represented at the present day,—appear ever to have adopted very harsh measures towards the unfortunate Christians of those places.

The account of the Ambassador tallies so exactly with the description of Mr. Barclay, and other modern travellers, that it is worth hearing.

"When the Ambassadors came to any place," says he, "an officer went on before, and the Ambassador from Timour Beg ordered food and horses and men for them; and if they did not come, the people received such a number of blows from sticks and whips that it was quite wonderful. Thus the people of these towns were so severely punished, that they fled whenever they saw a Zagatay coming. In these towns Armenian Christians resided."

If these valleys are made interesting by the description of such a very accurate traveller visiting them in the middle ages,—the neighbouring mountains deserve the attention of a scholar.

It was from them, that, more than two thousand years ago, the ten thousand Greeks, after forcing their way, under the command of the immortal Xenophon, through Armenia, first beheld the long-hoped-for waters of the Black Sea.

He who has followed the fortunes of the determined retreat of that band of heroes, as it is described by the illustrious commander himself in the "Anabasis," must ever be moved by the pathos and simplicity with which that celebrated event is placed before the very eyes of the reader. Long despairing of ever seeing home again; ignorant even of their position or distance from the sea; harassed by constant attacks of Koords, and other ruthless and cruel savages, they wandered among the circumjacent fastnesses, always facing about and showing a bold front to the enemy whenever too closely pressed.

Their endurance and good conduct were at length crowned with the success it deserved; and a native guide led them to a mountain from which they descried the Euxine.

When their eyes rested on the dark blue expanse touching the horizon far down below—it is easy to imagine the joy and gladness animating their souls; as well as the thoughts of home, children, and family filling the hearts of the brave soldiers, who beheld the water with sentiments exactly similar to those with which the despairing castaway on the ocean feels hopes of salvation from the distant and unexpected loom of land.

To appreciate entirely such natural emotion, it is necessary to read the whole "Anabasis" through, because in it the keen interest of the reader is ever kept alive; and, as his sympathies with the little band of Greeks are strongly awakened, the elegant description of their delight makes him feel it too.

"As soon as the men who were in the van-guard," says Xenophon himself, in his fourth Book—"as soon as the men who were in the vanguard ascended the mountain and saw the sea, they gave a great shout; which, when Xenophon and those in the rear heard, they concluded that some other enemies attacked

them in the front . . . . . The noise still increasing as they came nearer, and the men as fast as they came up running to those who still continued shouting, their cries swelled with numbers so, that Xenophon, thinking that something more than ordinary had happened, mounted on horseback, and taking with him Lycias and his horse, rode up to their assistance. And presently they heard the soldiers calling out, 'The sea! the sea!' and cheering one another. At this they all began running, the rearguard as well as the rest; and the beasts of burden and horses were driven forward. When they were all come up to the top of the mountain, they embraced one another, and also their generals and captains, with tears in their eyes. And immediately the men, by whose order it is not known, bringing together a great many stones, made a large mound, upon which they placed a vast quantity of shields made of raw oxhides, staves, and bucklers, taken from the enemy.

"At length the army arrived at the sea, and at Trebizonde, a Greek city well in-

habited, and situated upon the Euxine; it is a colony of the Sinopians, but lies in the country of the Colchians."

On the mountains above Ghumish Hana, wild honey is found in great abundance; but as the bees who make it feed entirely on the flower of the rhododendron, with which these heights are in every direction covered,—its too copious consumption is said by the natives to produce effects exactly similar to that of regular intoxication.

"And," says Xenophon, "there being great quantities of bee-hives in those villages, all the soldiers who eat of the honey-combs lost their senses and were seized with vomiting and purging; none of them being able to stand upon their legs. Those who eat but little were like men very drunk; and those who eat much, like madmen, and some like dying persons.

"In this condition great numbers lay upon the ground as if there had been a defeat, and the sorrow was general. The next day none of them died, but recovered their senses about

the same hour that they were seized; and on the third and fourth day they got up as if they had taken physic."

The conquests of Paskievitch in 1829 terminated at Ghumish Hana, which is about one hundred and ten miles from Erzerum.

Its inhabitants, according to the official chronicler of that celebrated general's exploits, were so rejoiced at the appearance of the Russians, that all the Greek girls, going out to welcome their co-religionists, strewed the road they trod with flowers or posies; and, singing hymns of praise or carrying grotesque implements of superstition, accompanied the staff of the army to the cathedral, which echoed with the noise of a general thanksgiving.

Peace was then made; and at this picturesque spot the victories of the renowned Paskievitch were stopped by the arrival of a diplomatic officer from Constantinople.

In summer, when the snow has melted from the tops of the superior ranges, and refreshed with many a foaming torrent the sunny slopes and shady fruiteries among the sheltered glades

below,—every mountain-side and valley rejoice in the bounty of nature, which here returns its choicest gifts for the easiest and most gentle labour.

Even in the depth of winter, when the white and jagged outline of the Zigana Dagh stands out in bold relief against the blue firmament, and when the dense pine-forests are exquisitely embellished with glittering ornaments of frost and ice,—the frozen traveller coming down from the high Armenian uplands is comforted by the balmy atmosphere of the place.

One day in the month of January, 1878, after leaving this Lasistani Arcadia, in order to cross the mountain,—the clouds became black and lowering.

A fine and serene afternoon gave place to an evening so stormy and so wild, that we hurried on in order to obtain shelter from a hurricane already roaring with incredible violence among the surrounding heights.

Frequently sulking, trembling all over, and turning their tails to the blinding and irritating stream of snow and powdered ice in which we

were ever and anon submerged, the horses were afraid of being blown over the steep and undefended precipices dropping suddenly and abruptly from the roadsides into the clefts far down below; and as whirlwinds of frozen particles threatened at each moment to overwhelm our cavalcade, we were all fain to let go the reins and hide our faces in our hoods.

Occasional glimpses through the hurricane disclosed the boldest sources of the sublime; for the wild drift, dashing against and spouting over the most time-honoured, exposed, and rugged headlands, unfolded, though often only for a few seconds, dream-like prospects as fantastic as the flames of a mighty conflagration.

Huge columns of snow,—growing up from among clefts and chasms in the vast panorama of rock and precipice and forest, above, below, and all round us,—fell away again and again like spent rockets.

Flying masses of cloud, equal, apparently, in solidity and volume, to the waves of a heavy

sea, poured and rushed like spray among the crags and up the sides of cliffs.

Great heaps of snow, made heavy with accumulated bulk, slid down the mountain-sides; and, increasing in size and weight as they sped onwards, the trees of the forest, unable to withstand the shock, were torn from their roots and carried off.

Trembling at the embryo of an avalanche almost hanging over our heads,—we had scarcely time to pass before the weighty mass gave way. Barricading the track with a rampart about six feet in height, which it left behind, it moved sluggishly into a neighbouring chasm, where it was confounded and lost below the drift.

Such is the discomfort of travelling in Armenia that, amid this riot of the elements, we were forced to pass the night in a half-open shed, where, rolled up in furs and sheepskins, we enjoyed a heavy sleep, that might have been envied by men in better lodgings.

Next morning, on our determining to proceed,—a deputation of villagers declaring that

the Zigana Dagh was now impassable, solemnly warned us not to risk our lives in an attempt to cross.

With a view to proving, in case of accidents, that it was our folly in refusing to listen to the voice of experience which had caused our destruction,—they asked me to furnish them with a written statement certifying that they, at least, had done their duty in telling me to stop.

Once upon a time twenty-five horsemen had, they said, been swept into eternity by falling snow; and the dangers of the mountain were so well known, that not a single peasant of the neighbourhood would dare to go across on such a fearful day.

When it is recollected that at the passage of the Splugen (the greatest military feat of modern times), the French army corps under Marshal Macdonald lost whole companies swept by the tumbling avalanches into that well-known cockney tourists' stream at the bottom,—the Lazes' story of the destruction of the twenty-five horsemen is certainly an extremely probable event.

Very unwilling, however, to spend three or four days in the wretched and comfortless hovel in which we had passed the night,—I induced a Laze, much against his strongly expressed convictions, to come with me as guide, so that if the journey were possible he might help us on the road.

This hardy mountaineer accompanied us for about five miles; but as we ascended higher and higher the snow became so very deep, and the cuttings by which we wended our toilsome journey along the mountain-sides so very indistinct,—that even he at length refused positively to go a step further.

Here it was almost impossible to move along; the snow generally touched, and often even covered, our feet as we sat in the saddle; and Highlanders assured us that in many places the drifts were ten and even twenty feet

On every side, and as far as the eye could reach,—when the storm had cleared away by the following day,—there was a vast and monotonous spectacle of unbroken, irregular, and eternal

whiteness, contrasting strongly with the intense blue of the firmament mingling with it.

No workmen are employed, as in Switzerland, to keep the road open; so unless one of the large caravans from Persia happens to come along, the pass may remain closed for several days.

In many places the way was altogether impeded and blocked up by vast masses of snow, stretching like great headlands across its course.

Everywhere the cuttings through the steep sides of the superior ranges were so thoroughly imbedded, that it was only on the very brinks of their outer edges, overlooking the precipices, where we could find spots on which horses might tread without sinking to the girths.

Luckily, the tinkling of bells comforted us with the assurance that a large caravan was coming up, and shortly afterwards a long string of about a hundred horses and mules, winding like a great snake along the zigzags, showed that the sturdy muleteers, each one of whom, according to the saying of a celebrated French-

woman, is worth three kings,—had determined at all hazards to force the pass.

All our party worked hard.

First sounding with long poles, then driving the horses into the deeper drifts, and afterwards stamping down the snow all round them, till a hole was made in the places where they had stuck, large enough to admit of another animal passing by and going through the same operation in front of him—we forced our way through every impediment, and reached the mountain-top in seven hours.

Horse after horse often almost disappeared from view in the deep snow; yet, so docile are these hardy animals, and so amenable to the labours expected of them, that—without stirring or showing any appearance of disorder—they remain quite fearlessly in the positions to which they are driven, till the passage of their companions enables them to take their place in the file, and walk on listlessly in the newly beaten down track.

The descent at the other side was equally difficult; and in many places we were delayed

for a long time in digging the baggage animals out of treacherous holes, into which they often entirely disappeared.

Two horses, falling over the precipice, vanished for ever into the deeply-filled clefts below.

One of my animals and his attendant very nearly shared the same fate.

They actually began slowly sliding down the mountain-side in the middle of a heap of dislodged snow, which, to our great joy and delight, was stopped by an impediment of trees and stones.

We all took such pains to rescue them from their perilous position, that we succeeded in saving them by means of ropes.

A traveller, journeying through the long and winding Valley of Ghumish Hana, might easily fancy himself in Tyrol. Its inhabitants are Greeks and Lazes; the latter descendants of the ancient Lazi, mentioned by Pliny,—and since converted to Mahommedanism.

The rocks above are crowned with picturesque old castles, some of which (owing, the people

said, to the displacement or obstruction caused by falling ruins) are entirely inaccessible.

The white houses with red roofs, so different from the brown, low, and mud-built constructions of the Armenian highlands overhead—the shady road ever winding among gardens, vineyards, or orchards, and passing rows of good and comfortable dwellings standing side by side on both sides of the way—lend the scene a homely and well-favoured tinge not often met with in these Oriental places.

The silver mines of Ghumish Hana (which means in English the silver house) are celebrated all over Turkey; and as the art of mining is said to be well understood by the people who work them, the district furnishes miners for all other parts of Anatolia.

The only mine now used is about a mile and a half on the other side of the heights beyond the town. The neighbouring cliffs are composed of limestones, shales, and indurated sandstone, intermixed in several places with granitical rocks in a state of decomposition.

It appears that the mine at Ghumish Hana

is, in consequence of the support given to the galleries by the natural rock, not shafted up at all. The direction of the principal shaft sloped twenty degrees to the south; but other galleries led out of it in all directions. Workmen labour by the light of lamps, and remove the rocky sides for the sake of its ore.

I believe there can be little doubt that these mines have never been worked according to prudent methods, although the hill-sides in many places contain the remains of galleries in which the ore has been exhausted.

CHAPTER III.

ARMENIAN LIFE.

Splendid Scenery.—Casabica's Castle.—Change of Scene.—Baibourt.—Excesses of the Russians.—The Garden of Eden.—View from the top of Mount Kope.—The Plains of Erzerum.—Intense Cold.—Construction of the Houses.—Xenophon's Description of them.—Their extreme filth.—Xenophon's Account of the March of the Ten Thousand Greeks through the Plain.—View of Erzerum.—Moses of Khorene.—His Description of the Town.—Fate of two English Knights there.—Curious Appearance of the Town.—The Citadel and Cheftah Minarets.—Fortifications.—Men and Animals walk on Paths across the House-tops.—Disgusting State of the Streets.—Fearful Hurricanes of Snow or Dust, according to the Season.—Danger from the Snow-drifts.—Wolves in Erzerum.—Armenian Life and Cookery.—Droves of Cattle.—Goats do the Duty of Sheep Dogs.—Return of the Flocks.—Armenian Women.—Their curious Tastes in Dress.—Their Virtue.—Their pretended Contempt for Female Levity.—Their Frailty.—Its Punishments.—Their Costume favours Intrigue.—Their Liberty.—Their Marriages.—Decision of a Bishop.

CHAPTER III.

ARMENIAN LIFE.

THE entrance to the pass leading up into Armenia is by means of a rent or opening through a porphyritic rock, overlooked on the left-hand side by perpendicular cliffs—rising fifteen hundred feet above the river,—jagged at their extreme summit into peaks and pinnacles of fantastic shapes and unequal heights; and crowned high up indeed, and almost out of sight, by the mouldering castle of the before-mentioned Casabica, who, according to Gonzalez, "was a great thief."

No one could go through this opening in the rocks without his permission, as even a few stones, detached from his impregnable perch near the sky, would have easily arrested the

advance of an army, much more of a half hundred timid travellers.

It is impossible to conceive anything more beautiful than this prospect.

It is from green fields, and shady trees standing on the banks of a clear and murmuring stream, that the beholder looks up among wild rocks which present a contrast altogether sudden and opposite.

The two extremes of soft landscape and savage grandeur are shown quite close together.

After riding through a succession of narrow gorges, bounded on both sides by barren heights of greenstones, traps, and other igneous rocks,—the summit of a melancholy ridge is reached.

The great plains, brown in summer, but always deeply covered up with snow during the winter months,—are in the ancient kingdom of Armenia called by the Turks the Pashalic of Koordistan.

At the opposite side of these extensive pastures is situated the town and castle of Baibourt.

As far as the eye can reach, not a single tree is to be seen; and, except Armenian villages hardly appearing above the level of the ground, —nothing breaks the hideous and depressing monotony of a landscape, than which it would be difficult to imagine anything in the world more repulsive to the eye.

This town of Baibourt, celebrated by Turkish writers for the beauty and fatness of both its women and its sheep,—was so completely destroyed by Paskievitch in 1828, that seven years afterwards, when visited by Mr. Hamilton, it had not recovered from the effects of the wanton cruelty of its Russian conquerors.

They so completely sacked and gutted the place, that the old Turkish quarter on the hill was never built up again; and to this day presents the appearance of a picturesque ruin.

The ancient castle, although attributed to the Genoese, was evidently, from the nature of parts of its beautiful and symmetrical architecture, a Saracenic construction.

The gate, with its several Turkish and Arabic inscriptions, together with a great lion rudely

sculptured under the arch, shows that it belonged to the Ottomans and to the Persians in later times; while, on the contrary, there is nothing whatever to justify a belief that it was ever possessed by Italians.

Either winding through narrow and rocky passes, or else crossing well-watered little valleys deeply imbedded among bleak and rugged mountains entirely destitute of shrubs or trees,—the road, continually ascending, always runs side by side with the Tchorouk Sou, said to be anciently the Pison, one of the four rivers flowing, according to the Holy Scriptures, out of the Garden of Eden.

In a gorge about three hundred feet wide, at the foot of Mount Kope, the stratification of the rocks, consisting of indurated shales, sandstones, and calcareous marls, is quite perpendicular; and there cannot be any doubt but that the opening has been formed by subterranean agency.

The road crosses and recrosses the stream several times, until at length, after a steep and winding ascent, the summit of mountains ten

thousand feet above Trebizonde,—and forming the watershed between the basin of the Yefrad or Euphrates and the streams which at the Baibourt side flow into the Black Sea,—is reached.

The view from this elevated position is, in the depth of winter, very remarkable.

It comprises a grand and melancholy prospect, containing not only Erzerum itself, but the heights behind it, overlooking Hassan Kala as well as the superior ranges of the cold Soghanli Dagh so far away. No trees or variety of colour break the awful monotony of the scene; and the whole country being very deeply covered up in snow, there is nothing whatever to variegate an eternal dazzling and truly bewildering whiteness, colouring hill, rock, mountain, and valley as far as the eye can reach.

At a great distance, but so very far down below as to be almost indistinct, villages in the great white and silent Erzerum Plain—appear here and there like drops of ink or short black lines on very clean creamlaid note-paper.

Even the capital itself,—called Erzerum by the

Turks, Garin by the Armenians, and Theodosiopolis by the Greeks,—can only be distinguished from the neighbouring towns by a large dark spot of greater magnitude than the others.

As the plains in the neighbourhood of Erzerum are situated about six thousand feet above the level of Trebizonde, the cold there in winter is altogether glacial.

When the wind blows freshly across the circumjacent expanses of snow and ice, the current of air becomes so excessively sharp and biting, that any part of the body exposed to it, even for a few moments, quickly becomes numbed with excessive pain.

In order to guard the feet against danger of frost-bite, large felt slippers are put on outside the boots; and double mitts, without fingers, are alone a safe protection to the natural circulation of blood in the hands.

The construction of the houses, quite different from that of the dwellings in the temperate valleys lower down,—indicate at first sight the extreme severity of the climate.

They are sunk into the ground; covered

with heavy flat roofs piled up with earth; and generally present the appearance of large mole-hills with very little doors, through which their occupants, stooping low, go in and out.

Men and animals usually live in the same chamber.

The bodies of the latter exhale a genial heat; and at the side, a small place near the lurid cow-dung fire is railed off for the convenience or entertainment of passing visitors or friends. This space is called the Salamlik or parlour.

A few mattresses, containing fleas, cotton, or straw in equal proportions, are spread out near the hearth for the repose of the sleepy traveller, who, after the longest journeys, and at a time when he most needs solitude and rest, is generally teased by the curiosity of the villagers, which prompts them to assemble in crowds, and sitting down in rows, like people at an entertainment, to watch and study with great attention, though usually in perfect silence, every movement and attitude of the European stranger.

In Christian villages the inhabitants are

always much less obtrusive, and far more respectful than the haughty Osmanli, who, although invariably expecting to be well paid for both food and lodging,—considers that the traveller is his guest, and that it is his duty to entertain him on equal terms.

The dignity and gravity of the poorest Turkish peasant fit him admirably for this pretension; and were it not that our European prejudices teach us to expect great deference from a coarsely-clad mountain boor, it may be that there would be nothing unpleasant in the arrogation.

On one occasion nearly a whole village of Koords insisted on watching me shaving my face; and it was only with great difficulty, and aided by three Zaptéehs, but more especially by a bludgeon,—that I could induce the rascals to let me perform my ablutions in peace.

The simple life of the inhabitants of the mountains of Armenia is entirely conducive to robust health; and those odious hereditary complaints resulting from profligacy, gluttony, and drunkenness, are entirely unknown.

The people retire to rest and rise up again with the sun; and their slumbers being assisted with the healthy occupations of the day, and undisturbed by a superabundance of unwholesome food,—compose the nerves and refresh the bodies. Notwithstanding the extreme severity of the climate, pulmonary affections are very unusual; and although the cutting snowdrifts often cause frost-bite and affections of the eyes, the people take every precaution to guard against such serious accidents.

The houses of the Armenians were, according to Xenophon, "under ground; the mouth resembling that of a well, but spacious below. There was an entrance dug for the cattle, but the inhabitants descended by steps. In these houses were goats, sheep, cows, and fowls, with their young. All the cattle were maintained within doors with fodder."

Among the pastoral nations of Asia it is probable that neither the mode of life nor the manner of thinking have changed since the days of Abraham; but the account of Xenophon is in every way so exactly descriptive of

the architecture of Armenian villages, that it is certain their inhabitants are still as primitive as were their ancestors before the birth of Christ.

At a short distance, a collection of fifty or sixty underground houses cannot, except for the little square holes used as doors or windows,—be distinguished from the rugged sides of the hill into which they are built.

Men and animals, coming home for the night, disappear, one after the other, through these apertures.

All through the winter, both the cattle and the fowl are kept in the houses; and when the summer comes, the manure which they have trodden down being taken out, made into large cakes, and baked in the sun,—serves as a kind of fuel, under the name of tizek.

The extreme filth of such habitations,—the only resting-places for travellers in Armenia,—can easily be imagined. The swarms of vermin which they contain are altogether wonderful.

The remains of the ancient civilisation of Asia Minor are still palpable in the shapes

and forms of the household utensils of the people; for the pitchers, trays, and dishes, although only made of brass or copper, resemble in many respects the purest Etruscan style.

In their march among these mountains, the ten thousand Greeks appear to have suffered much more from the inclemency of the weather, than from the desultory attacks of the barbarians; and, says Xenophon, "the last day's march was very grievous, for the north wind blowing full in their faces, quite parched and benumbed the men. Upon this one of the priests advised to sacrifice to the wind, which was complied with, and the vehemence of it visibly abated. The snow was a fathom in depth, insomuch that many of the slaves and sumpter horses died, and about thirty soldiers . . . . .

"From thence they marched all the next day through the snow, when many of the men contracted the bulimy. Xenophon, who commanded the rear, seeing them lie upon the ground, knew not what their distemper was.

But being informed by those who were acquainted with it, that it was plainly the bulimy, and that if they eat anything they would rise again, he sent to the baggage, and whatever refreshment he found there he gave some to those who were afflicted with this distemper, and sent persons able to go about, to divide the rest among others who were in the same condition; and as soon as they had eaten something they rose up and continued their march . . . .

"Some of the men also who had lost their sight by the snow, or whose toes were rotted off by the intenseness of the cold, were left behind. The eyes were relieved against the snow by wearing something black before them, and the feet against the cold by continual motion and by pulling off their shoes in the night. If any slept with their shoes on, the latchets pierced their flesh, and their shoes stuck to their feet; for when their old shoes were worn out they wore carbatines made of raw hides."

The road, after creeping down the overhang-

ing fastnesses of Mount Kope, passes through a deep gorge at Poornakapan; and following the right bank of the Euphrates, leads through Ashkalé. After running side by side with that far-famed stream in a deep and sombre valley, it crosses it by means of a wooden bridge.

In gentle ascents and descents it traverses the lower sinuosities of those richly-snowed mountains, shutting in on one side the great and white plain of Erzerum; and reaching the village of Ilaja,—celebrated among the Turks and Armenians, who resort to it in great numbers during the summer months, on account of its hot mineral baths,—at length emerges on to the flat plateau in which the celebrated capital of Armenia stands.

The view of Erzerum, as seen from Ilaja, (so perfectly flat and unvaried is the bosom of the surrounding pasture-lands,) exactly resembles that of a town looked at from the same distance by a person standing on the deck of a ship.

Although so highly elevated above the level of the sea, there is nothing grand or pleasing

in the view, which discloses to the eye of the traveller only a hideous flat hemmed in on all sides by bare and ugly mountains, differing in altitude as well as in shape.

This vast plain is populated by many villages, looking, when the deep snow covers the ground, so like rocks or islands, and even in the distance so like boats or sticks floating on the surface of a placid sea,—that the mind becomes confused in an attempt to count them.

According to the "Third Book of the History of the Great Armenia," by Moses of Khorene, who lived and wrote in the early centuries of the Christian era,—the construction of Garin (for the modern name of Arzrum, or the country of the Romans, was given to it by the Saracens in later times) is thus described :

"The General Anatole, by imperial order, came to our country. He traversed many of our provinces, and wished to construct in the province of Garin, as being in the centre of our country, a town upon productive ground, fertile, and rich in water. Being the centre of the country this locality is not far from

the place where the source of a part of the Euphrates rises, which in its easy course increases into a vast lake or sea. There was in it a great variety of fish, as well as a great variety of birds on whose eggs the inhabitants fed. On the banks of this marsh quantities of reeds and rushes are found. The plains produce herbs and fruits. The mountains are filled with animals with cloven feet and who chew the cud. Flocks being multiplied, are of good breed and very strong, and become marvellously fat . . . At the foot of this agreeable mountain a quantity of limpid sources are found . . . . Anatole raised high towers on the ramparts, of which the first was named Theodosius, in honour of the Emperor."

The town, as before remarked, is to this day called Garin by the Armenians ; but the Greeks, of whom there have always been a considerable colony in the place, still give it the name of Theodosiopolis ; and it is only to the Turks that it is known by the generally accepted Saracenic denomination of Erzerum.

A broad and impassable marsh, in the middle

of which the stream of the Euphrates runs sluggishly along, covers the centre of the great plain.

There is no doubt that the surrounding mountains, before that river forced its way through their lower ranges, were reflected in the waters of an extensive lake.

The hills at the back are composed of trachytic or other igneous rocks, the fall of which has formed a large talus running down towards Erzerum; and a cavity in these heights, at no great distance from the town, has, during the period of trachytic eruptions evidently been the crater of a volcano.

"In Armenia," says Gibbon, "the title of a kingdom and the spirit of a nation were annihilated" by Alp Arslan, or the Valiant Lion, who is said to have destroyed three hundred churches in the town of Erzerum alone.

With the usual unparalleled absurdity, the castle standing in the centre of the town is attributed to the Genoese; but as its architecture is so palpably a mixture of the Byzantine and Saracenic styles, containing pilasters and

cornices covered with arabesque tracings and sculptures, there can be no doubt whatever about its origin and alterations.

An ancient Armenian chronicle relates the melancholy adventures and fate of two English knights, who, taken prisoners from the army of King Richard of England, in Palestine, were confined for several months in a deep dungeon still existing underneath the walls of the old citadel; and finally put to death by being thrown from the top of one of the towers into the ditch below.

There is probably no town in the world which has been so often sacked; and as the natural terror, inspired in the minds of peaceful merchants by such fine exploits, has become, owing to its action on several generations, hereditary; every rumour of war, or even the noise of party strife in its streets, causes all the Armenian shopkeepers to shut their booths, save what is most portable, and devour the paths of ignominious flight.

In a few moments panics of this nature become universal; and as great inconvenience

is sometimes caused by such epidemics of cowardice, traders are occasionally punished, even when there is some reason for being sore afraid.

The Turks, who do everything by force, endeavour to frighten people into being brave.

The greater part of the houses in Erzerum resemble those of the Armenian villages throughout the country; but as they are built together in large square blocks, and covered with a thick coating of earth, which in the summer months produces a little grass, it is not uncommon to see goats and even asses browsing on the roofs overlooking the narrow and tortuous streets.

The population, during the coolness of the summer evenings, comes out here to enjoy the balmy breezes wafted downwards from the surrounding heights.

As some of the houses are two stories high, their upstairs windows look across the tops of neighbouring dwellings, which present the appearance of an irregular plain, intersected here and there with deep cuttings; for the

streets below, when seen from these points of view, bear an exact likeness to small canals or watercourses winding through heaps of bricks and clay.

After the citadel, constructed on a rock, the Cheftah Minarets are the most remarkable buildings in Erzerum, which indeed resembles more an enormous village than a capital town. These constructions were, without doubt, originally a church, first converted into a mosque, and afterwards ornamented with two high towers deeply fluted and built of variegated bricks and glazed tiles.

The modern town is surrounded by an enceinte, in which are comprised the heights overlooking the place.

It is protected by some detached forts on the summit of neighbouring elevations commanding these works.

The grass grows on the tops of the houses, and as men and animals may be observed walking about up there, the roofs, when looked at from a distance, present a very remarkable appearance.

They are undistinguishable from the plains below, and might easily be mistaken for a kind of hill or eminence on which a crowd had collected for a better view.

The two-storied houses, scattered sparsely among the rest, resemble cottages constructed on these grassy and flat-topped mounds; while little white tents, dotted here and there at the foot of domes or steeples, are no more than greased paper skylights, so placed as to admit a gleam of light into the gloomy and underground apartments underneath.

There are many paths, or short cuts, leading across the house-tops, and it is from such elevated highways that some of the most extensive prospects of the capital can be obtained.

At one time Erzerum must have been a city of considerable extent.

Inside the encircling enceinte, many ruins are observed standing by themselves in more or less open spaces. As the town is refreshed with a copious and never-failing supply of water always running down from the adjacent

heights, there are many fountains scattered in great profusion among the rugged and crooked streets; and here gaudily-dressed women and young girls watch for their turn at the trickling spouts.

A large colony of Persians are settled in the town, and in addition to their elegant costumes, crowned with the well-known very tall black hat, the streets are constantly enlivened with crowds of swaggering and long-haired Koords, all armed to the teeth; as well as by wild Turcomans, Tartars, Circassians, and Gipsies, together with picturesque representatives of the many peoples and tribes inhabiting the great mountains lying on the Russian, Persian, and Turkish frontiers.

There are no conservancy regulations, and the thriftly housewives throw all useless scraps of vegetables, dirt, or victuals into the muddy streets, where they are soon gobbled up by flocks of birds and packs of unowned dogs who act as scavengers.

A worn-out horse, bullock, or very emaciated jackass, when no longer fit for work, and

discarded by his owner, is turned abroad to die.

No sooner is the vital spark extinct, than its poor remains are disputed by churlish and wrangling curs, grinning or snarling at one another in noisy disputes about the choicest morsels of their revolting meal. Vultures and other obscene birds come down, and perching on the carrion, so pick the flesh and gorge themselves on the intestines, that before long naught but the whited skeleton is left.

For the greater part of the year the surrounding mountains are capped with snow; but during the sultry months towards the end of summer, the great plain becomes so parched and dried up from the intense power of the burning and fiery sun, that it assumes a brown and scorched appearance most fatiguing to the eye.

Sudden gusts of wind, rushing downwards through the sinuosities of the neighbouring hills, slam both doors and windows with startling shocks; and cause such masses of dust and blinding sand to pour upon the town,

that their thick impenetrable volume, often deadening the rays of the sun, causes an obscurity quite equal to that of a complete solar eclipse.

An open window, or even smaller cavity, acts like a sluice-gate, through which the powdered clay and mud, mixed with the offal of animals, stream in like sand down an hour-glass, and cause a condition of disorder difficult to conceive.

In winter the cold is so intense, that both man and beast prefer, if possible, to stay indoors; for then, the wind blows hard across the glacial plains, and by its continued action raises up small particles of snow, at first looking just like little puffs of smoke, but soon becoming so thick and high and wild that, even animals perceiving them from afar, testify in many ways—as they do in the Great Desert on the approach of a Simoon—their excessive terror.

In a few minutes the whole neighbourhood becomes submerged in a furious stream of frozen snow and pulverised ice, which, with fearful and hissing noises, splashes and roars

so violently through the streets and against the houses, that for hours together it is actually dangerous to face it in the open air.

Any part of the body exposed to its deadly action becomes withered and decayed; but woe to the unhappy wretch who is surprised in one of these sudden storms on the wide and dreary plain, or on the mountain-side. Several cases have occurred, even in Erzerum, where solitary individuals, having lost their way, bellowed in vain for assistance; as, owing to the wild uproar of the tempest, their cries or lamentations were unheard; and, often even only a few yards from their own little doors, they were left to perish miserably.

When the storm dies away, the pulverised matter by which the light has been obscured, disappears; notwithstanding the excessive cold, a bright sun shines from a firmament as clear and blue as that of Italy; and towards evening, when the red orb begins to hide itself behind the mountains, bright hues of exquisite delicacy and tenderness sparkle on their fantastic and milk-white outlines.

In very severe weather, the surrounding plains are infested with packs of famished wolves, who are occasionally made so daring by the pangs of extreme hunger, that, sneaking across the enceinte, they actually, during the midnight hours, wander about the streets of Erzerum in search of what they can pick up.

All night long the town dogs wail and howl and cry; but when the big wolves come in, that customary uproar is at once hushed up, and these noisy curs, apparently so bellicose and ferocious, huddling together in solitary and deserted places, remain very still till the more formidable animals have gone away.

It is customary in Erzerum, among the poorer families, for the descendants of a single pair to occupy the same house; in which, as in the villages, the fowls and animals are also kept. The flooring of these disgusting habitations is composed of mud; and when there is an upstair chamber, approached by a ladder, it is usually reserved for visitors or for state occasions.

There is no difference between the Armenian furniture and that of the Turks. Every room

is surrounded, or partly surrounded, by a raised platform, covered with rugs, mats, or cushions, where the people sleep, without undressing, on quilts and mattresses, always kept shut up in cupboards or chests during the day-time. The women are continually occupied with spinning, weaving, sewing, or cooking; and nowhere have I ever seen a Turkish or Armenian female employed at laborious tasks, or any description of outdoor work.

The Armenian cookery is equally wholesome, nutritious, and savoury.

Its principal dishes are the Yakné or Irish stew; the dolmah, minced meat rolled up in vine-leaves; the kabob, so well known even in England; the chorbab, a thin soup mixed with rice and onions; the baklavah, a sweet and very light paste made with honey; the lokma, a delicious kind of very digestible puff or *vol au vent* slightly smeared with honey, and of which several dozens can be eaten without any inconvenience or heaviness. Last of all, there is the pillau, spiced, peppered, plummed, and almoned, and generally accompanied by the

never-failing Yow-ourt, a kind of blanc-mange or rennet.

Very early in the morning, and when the snow having melted off the ground, enables all the cattle confined in the houses of Erzerum during the winter months, to go out to graze and browse about the plains and marshes down near the Euphrates, several men walk round, and knocking at the doors, take charge of the beasts which are driven out to them. Each dwelling sends forth one or several cows and bullocks; so that when they are assembled together, a large herd streams through the town-gates, and goes away to revel all day long about the vast pasture-lands in the neighbourhood of that great river.

Hundreds of such flocks, darkening the plain in the far distance, are each under the control and direction of their own particular herds or shepherds.

When the day begins to wane, they all return, marshalled by fierce dogs, or often led by an old buck-goat, proud of his position, and marching superbly and with very measured

paces, like those of a fine drum-major, stick in hand, at the head of his battalion. It is amusing to note how occasionally he will mark time, and butt with his head at any of the flock which dares to try and get in front of him (while another drove of cattle are passing by); for each herd keeps together, so that on their arrival in the town, he who has looked after them all day is able to count his charge and see that none are missing.

The dogs, quite as intelligent as their masters, always preserve order, and bite and snap at any cow or sheep desirous of causing confusion by placing itself in a drove to which it does not belong.

The dust raised by such enormous crowds of animals, marching together, through the extremely fine powder ever covering the paths and roads, causes the formation of a cloud which spreads throughout the neighbourhood like a real London fog.

Every cow, goat, or sheep knows its own house; and as the cavalcade to which it belongs passes by, it makes a headlong charge and

rushes in, quite regardless of what mischief is done, or what accidents are caused to men, women, or children lolling listlessly in the way.

After a succession of these sudden and violent departures from the ranks, the herds wandering about the town become smaller and smaller, and at length finally disappear as if by magic.

The Armenians are a handsome race, and, in the words of Tournefort, "the best and most honest people in the world." Their features are generally large, but the expressive and swimming black eyes of the women, always shaded behind lashes of unusual length and thickness, lend their clear olive complexions a peculiar charm, heightened perhaps by a certain diffidence or timidity which leaves them when they talk.

Although inclined, even when still young, to obesity and fatness, their waists are small, their arms rounded, their throats firm, and the thorax largely developed by the healthy life as well as by the mountain air.

Waddling about the streets, the greatest Armenian beauties look just like animated bundles of rags; and men who have seen them only thus caparisoned, might easily carry away the false impression that they are square-built, squat, without figures, and very awkward.

In their own homes, and in the negligence of a loose undress, allowing full play to the easy movements of their supple limbs, the girls present a very different appearance; and such indeed as might, to an impressionable temper, prove dangerous.

Their ordinary costume, when they are not disfigured by what they call ornamenting themselves for company, and when they loll about on cushions to receive visits, consists of a pair of very loose, bright-coloured trousers, secured tightly over the ankle so as to expose the naked foot; a chemise, laying bare the throat, fastened tightly round the waist with a gold, silver, or velvet belt, and reaching down outside the pantaloons no further than the knee; together with a kind of embroidered waistcoat, cut square,

very open in front, and secured with a string just below the bosom; but beyond these three garments they wear nothing else.

Their hair, usually silky and of exuberant growth, falls down the back in a great thick plait, tied up at the end with bunches of ribbons. Such is Akabia or Accateena when really at home; but if obliged to show themselves to strangers they will encase their feet in square-toed French boots, which never fit, and which give them an awkward and stumbling gait as soon as they move about. By way of adding further to their charms, they love to cover the trousers, chemise, and embroidered waistcoat with a bright green, red, or yellow silk gown, formed and put on in a manner so disgusting, that when looked at from behind, they present the awkward, ill-shapen, and squat appearance of an old charwoman in her Sunday clothes.

With a view to beautifying themselves still more, whenever they have occasion to walk abroad, they invariably cover even the gown with a thickly-wadded garment, something similar in cut to a man's frock-coat, while their

heads and shoulders are enveloped in a thin white shawl tightly drawn round their bodies.

Thus, swathed like Esquimaux, they naturally appear extremely clumsy and ill-shapen. Although never using a Yashmac, like Turkish women, they bend their necks and faces towards the ground, and pull their shawls across their mouths and noses at the approach of men; so it may be said that, in the streets at least, they conceal themselves quite as sedulously as their Mahommedan neighbours.

No women in the world pretend to set a higher value on chastity, decorum and virtue than the females of Erzerum; and yet, according to all accounts, there is no town in the Turkish Empire more celebrated or disgraced by the gallantry and incontinence of its feminine inhabitants.

If levity of conduct is clearly proved against a girl or a married woman, all her friends of the same sex, crowding to her house in a regular mob, assail her with the coarsest and most indelicate reproaches; and spitting on the ground, and placing themselves in very remark-

able attitudes expressive of contempt, make public accusations in which the richness of their native language is inexhaustible.

The co-respondent is not spared in these popular impeachments; and, if the tender feelings of the culprit are lashed into still greater shame, rage, and fury by the hatred and contempt poured out upon her lover, the crowd disperses quite pleased with its success.

Hardly a woman in the throng who has not been the object of similar ovations, and two or three days afterwards, when some other female, setting up for a vestal long after she has lost the qualification, is in a similar manner publicly arraigned, the young lady who only so short a time previously seemed overwhelmed with shame and confusion at the discovery of her own misdeeds, will be the first to scream, and rail, and execrate as though she herself had never done a wrong.

As the Armenians are essentially a tolerant nation, the girls are not so prejudiced as always to refuse attention to the sighs of an amorous Turk.

There have been many cases where young ladies, entirely abandoning their families and abjuring their religion, have, of their free will, become Mussulmans; in order to live for ever with the man after their own hearts.

Although similar tendencies towards the Christian religion on the part of a Mahommedan female are, owing to the laws of the country, quite impossible; Fatima or Ayesha are not always deaf to the persuasion or presents of a Ghiour.

If, however, an intrigue between a Christian man and a Turkish woman is discovered, the consequences are very trying, as the house in which they meet together is at once besieged by a large crowd of Turks of both sexes; and while the males composing it are in all likelihood beating the gentleman nearly to death, the females set upon the unfortunate Mussulmanee with their slippers and inflict on her a chastisement which, were the co-respondent a co-religionist instead of an unclean Ghiour, would perhaps have been limited to the exercise of their tongues as soon as she came home.

The law also mediates in such a case; and, perhaps to avoid the riot quite çertain to be created by the knowledge that a Mussulmanee was in the house of a disbeliever, the public force will at once interfere, effect an entrance, and arrest the male delinquent, who, unless rich enough to bribe the Cadi, is certainly severely punished for a crime which, not so very long ago, was a capital offence.

It is very curious to remark how often the most stringent measures for the accomplishment of certain objects entirely alter their own destinations, and bring about results the very opposite to those for which they were intended.

The meaning of secluding women and covering up their faces was to cause the members of that sex to be staid and decorous; to prevent that levity and freedom towards men so offensive to Oriental family despotism and jealousy; as well as not to give provocation to runners of adventures by tempting them with the attractions of laughing and sympathetic faces.

The consequences, no doubt anticipated by the framer of such cautious rules, have never-

theless been exactly the reverse of those which he expected..

The Turkish or Armenian woman, quite covered up, and the contours, perhaps, of an exquisite form totally concealed and disfigured among bundles of clothes, no sooner leaves her own door on the pretence of paying a visit to a friend, or for some equally frivolous and lying excuse, than, far from being, like her European sister, known to every tattling busybody; she can, unless watched from the commencement of her illicit peregrinations, go, and without the least fear of recognition or detection, wherever she pleases; for, although seeing all the men herself, not one of them can possibly tell who she is, what business she is on, or whether she is old or young.

Women in Turkey are allowed, in certain respects, perfectly unhampered liberty; and, provided they conform to the custom of keeping their faces quite concealed, may walk about the streets and bazaars, and stop away from home as long as they like.

Should they even want to stay abroad all

night, there are several excuses by which such absence can be accounted for.

The bedside of a sick friend, the unremarked passing away of the daylight hours as it was too late and dark to venture in the streets alone, and thus necessitated the safer and more convenient shelter of a neighbour's house till the sun lit up the town again, or some other equally plausible reason, is usually accepted as a complete justification by their often very complaisant lords.

The trade of the country is entirely in the hands of the Armenians, and were those useful shop-keeping and laborious people suddenly removed, the Turks would certainly starve to death; because the former having absolute possession of every kind of commercial and banking transaction, whatever is required must as a rule be sought for in a Christian's storehouse.

This circumstance often necessitates the prosecution of journeys not only into different parts of Asia Minor, but also to Constantinople, and even as far as Europe; and thus,

while the good-man of the house absents himself for longer or shorter periods, his wife is left alone and by herself.

With the natural inconstancy of a woman deprived of any mental resources with which to fill up her time, she often employs her leisure in listening to soft compliments on her beauty, accompanied by warm declarations of love; and it frequently happens that on his return a fond and expectant husband discovers his young wife living publicly as the acknowledged concubine of a more favoured rival.

Exactly similar to the sacrament of marriage as understood by the Roman Catholic Church, an Armenian once joined to a woman by the ties of holy wedlock, cannot, under any circumstances whatever, be divorced from her. God has joined them together, and the conjunction is eternal and irrevocable.

The only means of redress in such a case is a public application to the bishop, who, if he is asked, uses as a rule his best endeavours to bring the pair together again; but even then it frequently happens that the girl is sufficiently

obstinate or amorous to refuse respect to the advice of such a high authority; and sometimes she is not ashamed to declare her intention of remaining for ever with the man whom she has chosen on second thoughts.

Such inconstant damsels have third, fourth, and several thoughts before they really know their own minds; and it is not unique to find them going back to the right man at last, after a great deal of wrongdoing.

As far as I could understand it does not appear that any very withering social stigma is attached to such brazen-faced and immodest inconstancy; and if a woman is not so excessively fickle as to exceed the bounds of moderation in amorous vacillation, she is, to borrow our English expression, "visited."

Religion reproves infidelity, and the priests, an immoral and ignorant set of rascals, as the exponents of its rational and indispensable behests, rebuke the unfaithful, and warn them of the sin.

Nevertheless, they shut their eyes to a custom become so interwoven with the habits of the

immoral population of Erzerum, that any attempt on their part to put a stop to it would be altogether frivolous and vain.

On one occasion an Armenian—passionately attached to a very handsome girl only married to him quite recently, but who had left his protection for that of a younger and more wealthy rival — continually importuned the High Priest to force the damsel to come back to him. Every persuasion was in vain, and the young lady declared that rather than return to her lawful husband she would drown herself in the Euphrates.

As a last resource, both husband and wife were summoned to the church. The latter so confounded the former with a violent abuse of his diminutive person, as well as of his poverty and incapacity to support in a befitting manner the girl whose hand (she said) was obtained by false pretences of a competency altogether imaginary, that the High Priest himself was carried away by her eloquence.

After tacitly approving her fresh choice, and cautioning the co-respondent to endeavour to

merit so much touching and natural affection, he turned on the discomfited and ugly little plaintiff, drove him with ignominy from the cathedral, and even threatened to apply his sacred toe if he was not for the future quiet.

CHAPTER IV.

ARMENIAN CHARACTERISTICS.

The Family Life of the Armenians fits them for the Reception of Civilisation. — The Influence of Women. — The Respect in which they are held by the Armenians. — Their Authority in the Family.—The Respect in which Female Relatives are held.—Excellent Laws by which the Female Tongue is checked.—Armenian Courtship.—Turkish Courtship.—Men and Women in Church.—Armenian Gallants.—Poaching.—Women better cared for in the East than in the West.—Great Difference between the Inhabitants of the Towns and those of the Country. —Armenian Cheats and Liars.—Why Armenians are not allowed to serve in the Army.—A Mussulman's Opinion on that Subject.—Comparison between the Turkish and Russian System.

CHAPTER IV.

ARMENIAN CHARACTERISTICS.

A REMARKABLY strong bond exists among the Armenians as a people, and it may be that such almost unparalleled, and certainly very remarkable consistency is no more than an extension or development of the microcosm of their family life.

There are no people in the world among whom the family tie is stronger or more respected; and there are certainly no people in the East among whom the position of women is so exalted.

It is the latter circumstance which seems to fit them especially for the reception of the best influences of modern civilisation; because in

any race so educated and brought up as to regard women as mere animals or machines, with no other destination than that of ministering to the pleasures of the male, and with no higher object in life than a servile obedience to his commands, the noblest and most humanising ascendency is wanting for the control, censure, or subjugation of those detestable excesses of which unreproved and unabashed men have at all times been only too capable.

The physical is always governed by the moral. Women, although much weaker, have very often infinitely greater tact and address than men.

Leading, as they do, a much more sedentary life, and usually occupied with the care of little children, which of all employments is most calculated to soften and fill with gentleness and sympathy the disposition, they are so humane and harmless (except with their tongues, in reality their only weapon), that not more than five per cent. among executed criminals belong to the fair sex.

Nothing is more remarkable than the extra-

ordinary influence, never entirely eradicated, even by the most corrupting associations, exercised upon the character and bearing of a man who has had the advantage during his impressionable days of the society and friendship of refined women. No matter how great his talents, no matter how extended his experience of society, or of the world may be, he who has not at the commencement of his career been animated with the exalted feelings and amiable and romantic sentiments only capable of being thus instilled into the mind of youth, carries with him through life a void never afterwards filled up.

The difference of sex is never forgotten; and a celebrated philosopher, a close observer of mankind, has truly observed, that except with a woman there is no friendship.

Man being the stronger, it is conceivable that in his natural and brutal state he should tyrannise over the female; but as all society from which women are banished, lacks every element of what is most charming and delightful to anyone of taste and refinement, and soon, un-

less enlivened with riot or excess, becomes insipid and dull; it is evident that they were destined by an all-seeing Providence to form the spirit of social relations, to soften the austerity, cruelty, and ferocity of men, to polish their manners, and thus develop the humanising influences of modern civilization.

The whole of Europe during the middle ages existed in a continual state of war, rapine, and anarchy, till the spirit of chivalry, inspired by a romantic attachment and respect for the ladies, afforded a considerable protection against the oppression and violence to which weak and unarmed people were continually exposed.

Filled with sentiments quite ridiculous to modern notions, many gentlemen, at the instigation of their mistresses, and to prove themselves worthy of their love, declared themselves the protectors and avengers of injured innocence wherever they could find it. To defend a helpless woman or forlorn orphan were acts of the highest merit and renown; and when courtesy was applauded as the most amiable of

knightly virtues, and when kindness and humanity were no less necessary to support the character of a true gentleman, war was carried on with less ferocity, and more gentle and polished manners introduced.

The advance made by Europe in the path of civilisation, and the superiority which it enjoys over all the still barbarous countries of Asia, have been effected by such noble sentiments taking possession of the minds of men, who otherwise would have never emerged from the barbarity and brutality apparently inherent in their sex.

The love of a good woman is a sure foundation for the formation of a good man; but as polygamy, although giving the male possession of the persons of several females, hinders his ever gaining the heart of any one of them—the owner of so many charms is entirely unacquainted with either the pleasures of domestic life, or the refinement and amiability produced by men and women mixing together in society and on equal terms.

To admit women to an association on such

a footing, they must be respected; and wherever they are looked up to, their natural gentleness and softness will be reflected in the manners and character of the people.

The patriarchal character of Armenian institutions allows great freedom to the woman, who, as soon as she has passed through a certain quaint penance with which her first entrance into the married state is shackled and impeded, becomes, in the event of her out-living her man, the head of a community consisting of all her children, with their husbands and wives, as well as perhaps fifty or sixty grandchildren.

All the family obey her religiously but with great alacrity; and until her death, the little society—putting one in mind of similar institutions mentioned in the Holy Scriptures,—looks upon her as a kind of queen. It is not till her decease that the family separates; but even then, so strong is the domestic tie, the eldest son occasionally inherits her commanding privileges.

In the event of the family becoming too large, or should serious disputes and quarrels

break out, it is customary for the priests or chiefs of the village to divide whatever property they may possess in common among them all.

Each daughter receives a portion equal to half that of a son; but should she enter another community, or leave her own family during the lifetime of her parents, she forfeits all claim to inheritance in consideration, perhaps, of a dowry made over to her on quitting the house.

First and even second cousins feel for and speak of each other as brothers and sisters; and so necessary for the preservation of pure morals among men and maidens constantly associating on terms of unrestrained familiarity and affection, is the initiation during youth of lofty sentiments towards the female, that the education and prejudices of the young Armenian teaches him to respect the modesty of his third cousin in a manner altogether brotherly, and as though she were indeed his own sister.

The religion of the Armenians forbids marriages between individuals so distantly related to each other as the great-grandchildren, and

even the descendants to the seventh generation of the same pair; and so profound is the reverence of the people for the severe injunctions of its Church with regard to matrimony, that the indulgence of unlawful passion within the prescribed degrees of consanguinity is completely and absolutely unknown.

Respect for the head of a family must ever be a strong bond of union; and were it not for the implicit obedience with which parents are at all times almost blindly submitted to, it would certainly be quite impossible for several young married women to live peaceably together under the same roof.

No sooner is a young girl married, than she is instructed in the (to a woman) most useful and difficult art of holding her tongue.

Long experience has taught the Armenians that, were such a fearful and venomous organ, or rather weapon, allowed full play, all harmony, peace, and concord would be entirely banished from a society in which so many females live together in common.

In order to guard against noise, disturbance,

or quarrelling, the bride is prohibited, till she has had a child, from entering into conversation except with her own husband.

She is also made the drudge and servant of all the other women; but the marriage of a brother-in-law emancipates her from that position.

Nobody rejoices at his wedding more than herself.

She is first permitted to talk to her child; afterwards to the females, but in a low tone so that the men may not hear what she says.

It is not for several years that she enjoys the full prerogative, so highly prized by every woman, of speaking in whatever tone she chooses, and of giving her opinion on any subject she likes, whether knowing anything about it or not.

There is nothing the least humiliating in this whimsical custom, for it is no more than a preparation or education by which a woman, being taught the respect and deference due to her seniors when she is young, learns in after-life, and when her turn comes round, how to keep other people

in order and in their proper place. It is like the training of a public school, than which nothing can be more beneficial; and the originator of that useful custom displayed a great knowledge of human nature when he instituted such an excellent and wholesome rule.

The Turk, whose appreciation of the female arises from sentiments altogether different from those of the more cultivated and half-civilised Armenian, usually procures his wife by means of the interposition of an old woman, from whose sensuous descriptions or panegyrics he falls in love with some unseen and unknown beauty, ever hidden from his sight till actually his better half, or quarter, or whatever fraction of himself she may share with her rivals in the harem.

With the Armenians the custom is entirely different; and they, to use the words of Mr. Pamely, a missionary who has written a work called "The Mountains of Ararat," make up to the girls very much as they do in America.

In towns where the Armenians live by themselves, and where there are no Mussulmans to

insult females going abroad uncovered, the girls run about unveiled and bare-headed.

Enjoying as they do free intercourse with their young countrymen, love-suits are carried on without any of the restrictions usually hampering, among Orientals, the natural sympathies and affections of the heart.

For this reason very sentimental and happy marriages are by no means uncommon; for although the girls, even after wedlock, are nearly always influenced by the good or evil counsels of their mothers, it often happens that nothing can prevent their cleaving to the man who has won them by the unswerving devotion of honourable love, and refusing, in opposition to the clamour of the whole family, re-echoed by the clergy, the hand of a less favoured though more wealthy rival. Such independence of feminine character is altogether beyond the conceptions of a Mussulmanee.

In the Armenian churches, generally roughly built but very solid constructions, decorated with a considerable quantity of tinsel and grotesque paintings indicative of art in its

lowest and most clumsy state, the men, who, according to the custom of the East, uncover their feet instead of their heads, are separated from the ladies.

The latter, so as not to distract the attention of the male part of the congregation from their prayers, are hidden behind a closely woven partition of trellis-work, through which they may stare at pleasure without being themselves observed.

This appears to be an excellent and certainly very sensible custom, and was no doubt instituted so as to prevent the house of God being used as a place where young men and maidens, if mingled together for any length of time, might take advantage of that circumstance in order to prosecute any kind of unlawful intrigue or courtship.

No sooner is the service over than the youths are often in an unseemly hurry to leave their places, so as to be in sufficient time to watch the door by which the girls, invariably with very modest faces and downcast eyes, come out.

And here, at least in Erzerum, will usually be seen a knot of those notorious gallants, or runners of adventures, known to the Turks by the name of Zomparas, or lady-killers, ever on the alert for the pursuit of any flower in the form of an Armenian beauty which such inconstant and dangerous butterflies may take a fancy to.

Instead of writing letters or sending presents to the object of his affections, the wily lover endeavours, in the first instance at least, to ingratiate himself into the good opinion of the mothers, who, always vain and generally covetous, are in many instances (to their shame be it said) the principal instruments by which a great deal of mischief and havoc is wrought among innocent and artless young women.

There are also a set of old hags, generally Armenians, who, making a livelihood out of ministrations to these social evils, are from long practice so extremely astute, plausible, and of such insinuating address, that hardly any woman, whether Turk or Christian, is safe

against the subtleties of their poisonous influence.

As pedlars or fortune-tellers, they manage to force their way into every household; to become intimate with the females who compose it, and by degrees to entertain them with romantic descriptions of the devotion of a lover who longs only to throw himself at their feet.

No rebukes, no dangers, will daunt their indefatigable perseverance; and as every difficulty or peril is smoothed down and disappears before the devilish charms of their oily tongues, they often succeed in corrupting the virtue and innocence of the most artless and unsuspecting girls. Their nets are, in the first instance, spread out with exquisite dissimulation, and cunning so profound as to be altogether imperceptible; but once the prey gets entangled in their meshes, it is no longer by gentleness and caresses, but by the most fearful abuse, tyranny, and threats of exposure, that a continuance of evil courses is produced.

These women, distinguished by a name which, in the Turkish language, has grown

into a term of abuse, are as powerful and important in Oriental life as lawyers in more civilised countries. Nothing can be done without their intervention. They know everybody's secrets; and, as a matter of course, enjoy an influence and consideration altogether wonderful when the extreme baseness and demoralisation of their hateful calling is considered.

Marriages are frequently brought about by their means, and such ties very often are no sooner effected than a dissolution is accomplished by their odious arts.

It is only in large towns that such abominable trades can thrive and flourish; but in the mountains and among the hardy and laborious population described by Tournefort as "the best and most honest people in the world," all the manly and feminine virtues of the pastoral state appear in their simple lives.

Far from resembling in any way the dissolute populations of the cities, they present, on the contrary, some of the noblest and most generous traits of which our nature seems capable.

Similar good qualities are found in the war-like, brave, and honest Turks living under the same conditions; but it is only among the rural inhabitants that such fine characteristics are observable.

The reason is simple. These excellent people are uncorrupted by that unequal division of wealth, which causes the possession of trinkets, or the accumulation of money, to be the first and only care of every individual wishing to obtain respect and consideration among his fellows.

Admiring our laws, our liberties, as well as our civilisation to such an extent that, in Turkey, a "very civilised man" is exactly synonymous to what we call in common conversation a "good fellow," nothing is neverthless so offensive and disgusting to the Oriental mind as the extraordinary, even appalling abundance of female profligacy and shame-facedness by which, not only our streets, but nearly all public places of cheap entertainment are disfigured.

Except in the large maritime towns, said to have been civilised and corrupted by long-

continued and constant intercourse with Europeans, any *appearance* or *parade* of immorality is entirely unknown throughout the whole of European or Asiatic Turkey.

Whatever laxity of behaviour, perhaps no greater than what takes place in the highly cultivated countries of the West, may sully the purity of Oriental life, it is never forced on the observation in a shocking and offensive manner, nor, as on the Continent, tolerated by the laws.

Every woman is under the care and protection of a man; and children born out of wedlock, so far from being stigmatised by barbarous laws similar to those of England, declaring that "a bastard hath no kindred," are cared for and protected according to the natural promptings of both humanity and reason.

Although I have seen several Armenians with hair and skin so light as not in any way to be distinguished from Europeans, they are generally of a dark olive complexion. Their eyes are full of intelligence, and nearly always jet-black. Their bearing is modest, and pos-

sesses that extreme courtesy ever accompanying the dread of summary and severe punishment. There is a great distinction between the honest and laborious Armenian who cultivates his field, and the trader of the same nation notoriously the greatest cheat and liar on the face of the earth.

Even in the smallest and most contemptible business transactions, the latter always endeavours, by some means or trick, to overreach whomsoever he has any dealings with; and one of them in a whining voice assured me that it was not the least use his telling the truth, because nobody (he said) would believe him if he did.

Such men become perfect masters of every kind of deceit, dissimulation, and roguery; and although many of them have risen to high official positions under the Turkish Government, and performed really good service to the State, they are never trusted, but always regarded with equal suspicion and dislike.

In recent times it has been proposed, by way of bettering their social standing and position,

to allow Armenians to enter the army, where, from associating on an equality with Turks, they might learn a little of that manly bearing and straightforwardness, the lack of which encourages a great deal of the insolence and contempt to which they are constantly subjected.

In the adventures of an Armenian named Joseph Emin, published by himself in 1792, he quotes an excellent answer, made by a Mussulman to whom he pointed out the hatred ever existing between members of the Christian and Mahommedan sects. "That does not signify a straw," said the Turk, "a soldier's religion is his sword; once eating bread and salt makes them all brothers to eternity, as if they had been born of one father and one mother; let the Moolas and priests differ on that head."

The experience of the Russian Caucasian army proves that the Turk was perfectly right. As remarked in another chapter of this work, the Muscovites have no native army, and their system of service makes every man joining the ranks, no matter what his nationality or religion,

a loyal Russian soldier, whose fidelity has never been doubted.

Although the Turkish Government might not put forward any serious objections to allowing Armenian peasants to enjoy the great honour and distinction of serving in the ranks of the Ottoman army, or even, which is doubtful, to permitting them to attain the exalted position of sergeant or corporal, they would never, under any circumstances, grant them the privilege of becoming commissioned officers.

The Turks are cautious; and being very jealous of their sovereign rights, there is nothing in the world, which even an enlightened and far-seeing Mussulman dreads so much as anything calculated to curtail them. Such an elevation of the despised Rayah would, if he were treated fairly, place him in a competition with Osmanlis, from which the latter would never return, to borrow their own expression, with "shining faces."

Excellent linguists, with a peculiar aptitude for science in all its branches, were selections for promotion in the Turkish army made by merit,

there can be little doubt that the intellectual Armenian would very soon become à scientific officer of the highest class ; and that the most important commands in the Ottoman army, as in that of the Russian, would be filled up by such men as Melikof or Tergugasof.*

To the mind of an ordinary Turk, such Armenian emancipation would be looked upon as sheer madness or wickedness, of the most heinous, criminal, and subversive nature; and would certainly be considered as monstrous as making a black man commander-in-chief of Her Majesty's Indian forces.

The weakness and impotence of the Turkish executive cause it to tremble at the mere notion of any useful or rational innovations. Uninstructed by the example of the Russians, who place Mussulmans on an equality with Christians for service in their army, and very often promote the former to positions of trust and

* Melikof and Tergugasof are both Armenians. The name of the first signifies the son of Melik, and that of the second, the son of Father Luke. Ter in Armenian may be translated, in fact, as reverend. Tergugasof means Reverend Luke's son.

importance, the Ottomans carefully exclude their Armenian subjects from any chance or hope of such advancement.

Nothing tends so much to produce feelings of brotherhood and friendship as service in the field; and so easy is it to discipline the Oriental, who learns to obey with alacrity whatever constituted authority he may be placed under, that on several occasions during the last fifty years, Mussulmans in both English and Russian armies have fought against their co-religionists with as much valour and fidelity as though they belonged to the same race and faith as the masters whom they served.

Even in the last campaign, a considerable number of soldiers, Mussulmans by religion, and speaking the Turkish language, combated with equal zest against their Ottoman co-religionists.

Indeed, the van of the army marching on that occasion towards Erzerum, was for the most part composed of Mahommedan light horse, who certainly showed no disposition to fraternise with the stragglers or parties of the rear-guard, which they happened to surprise.

If the Russians can so conciliate Mahommedans as to cause them to serve faithfully in their ranks, there can be no reason why an equally rational organisation in the Ottoman army should not produce similar results.

It would soften by degrees that animosity of races, so detrimental to the strength of the Turkish Empire; and it would add greatly to the stability and cohesion of a nation always inviting foreign interference, in consequence of its internal divisions.

CHAPTER V.

OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY.

The Battle of Devaboyoun.—Hassan Kale.—Ancient Remains.—Mineral Springs.—Bridge over the Araxes built by Darius Hydaspes. — Keupri-Keui. The Soghanli Dagh.—Kars.—Its Capture.—Russian Thieves.—Their Treatment of Prisoners.—Hardships of the Turks in the Mountains. — Anecdote. — Admirable Qualities of the Turkish Soldier. — Habituated to Ill-usage. — Civilian Tacticians.—The Sufferings of the Turks equal to that of the French in the Retreat from Moscow.—Paskievitch raised Mussulmans for the Invasion of Turkey.—Resources of Armenia for Enlistment.—Armenian Towns all the same.—Ruins of Ani.—Its Wonderful Appearance.—Noble Architecture.—Its Condition at the Time of Moses of Khorene.—Alp Arslan sacks it.—His Fate.

CHAPTER V.

OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY.

Leaving Erzerum in the direction of Hassan Kale, the road, crossed by several streams, winds at the bottom of some low hills; and, after mounting by easy ascents the pass called Devaboyoun or Camel's neck, brings the traveller in sight of the picturesque ruins of Hassan Kale, built upon a mass of porphyritic trachyte half-way along the plain, but close to its left-hand side.

These heights must ever be celebrated for the total defeat of Mucktar Pasha's forces in November, 1877, where, to my extreme amazement, I witnessed the flight, for no perceptible

reason, of the whole Turkish army,* which abandoned in a panic its camp and baggage. So *bewildered* were the artillery-men that they did not even take the trouble to discharge either their field-pieces or guns in position, all of which were captured loaded, and quite ready to be fired off.

Nothing can be more confusing to the military mind than the manœuvres of two hostile mobs; because it is perfectly impossible to predict, with any chance of success, what will ultimately happen, or what is likely to occur next.

The operations of the Ottomans and Russians in Asia Minor were of this nature; and Von Moltke himself could hardly have foreseen, for instance, that about five hundred Turks, whom I counted myself, returning from an objectless fight named Eshek Kilias, should all have been wounded in the forefinger.† Several of these

* Mucktar Pasha's position was infinitely stronger than ours at Inkermann, in November 1854, and if manned by 5,000 Englishmen would have been reported impregnable unless turned.

† Eshek in Turkish means an ass. The Battle of Asses was a very suitable name.

heroes only answered, with broad grins, accusations that they had done it themselves.

All the accounts of this battle of Devaboyoun are so entirely different to what came under my personal observation on that memorable day, that perhaps I was labouring under some extraordinary hallucination.*

Although Edhem Pasha, a very drunken fellow, was described in print as a leader who would be an *ornament* to the cavalry brigade at Aldershot; I saw that ornament nevertheless leading a body of five hundred Turkish regular horsemen in their flight from five pursuing Cossacks representing with great exactness five armed costermongers, and mounted on ponies by no means so fleet or spirited as the traditional donkey. The actions, as well as the actors on these occasions, might have been dealt with in a spirit of greater accuracy.

The prospect from the top of the pass into

* A celebrated English general, lecturing on this subject, represented the Turkish left flank pivoted on Goorjee Bohaz; a place twenty miles off, and separated from Devaboyoun by a range of mountains.

the Plain of Hassan Kale, is one of the most melancholy and dismal that it is possible to conceive.

Nowhere is the eye relieved by the appearance of either a tree or a shrub; and the large space, so black and lonely and perfectly flat, about eight miles in breadth by some twenty in length, is hemmed in all round by brown and dreary mountains, whose rugged outlines stand out in bold relief on every side.

Numerous villages, looking like irregular mounds of dust and ashes, dot in every direction this solemn scenery; but all day long the journey of a traveller is quite unenlivened by anything calculated to break even for a moment the eternal monotony of a landscape as unvaried and tiresome as the ocean itself.

At a distance of twenty or thirty miles, he can see very often his destination; and from the rising of the sun until it sets again, the rock or ruin overlooking the village where he purposes spending the night, is ever in view straight before his horse's nose.

Not far from Hassan Kale, a range of hills

approaching the river is very clearly marked with distinct lines of parallel beaches, conforming perceptibly to all the sinuosities of the heights and rocks.

Their clearly marked indentations prove beyond a doubt that, previous to the bursting through of the Bosphorus, the neighbouring mountains must have enclosed a lake of considerable size and magnitude ; and even to this day, when the melting of the snow causes the streams and rivers to swell so much, that the surrounding marshes are covered with expansive sheets of water, the bottom of the valley presents the appearance of a little inland sea.

It is worthy of remark that streams from the circumjacent heights, running in opposite directions according to the different courses of the watersheds, flow respectively to the Persian Gulf as well as to both the Black and Caspian Seas.

The first appearance of the miserable town of Hassan Kale presents every indication of desertion and ruin ; and it is not till a nearer

approach that any evidence of its being still inhabited is perceived. Its houses and bazaars are low, dirty, flat-roofed, and so very irregularly built, that the ancient ruins and battlements, smouldering down the side of the rock, are mixed up and confounded among the mean and dusty constructions of the Turks, Armenians, and Persians composing the population of the place.

In the neighbourhood of a feeder the river Araxes, flowing under its dilapidated walls, are situated two hot mineral springs covered by large domes.

Here people, coming from long distances, bathe in a solution of sulphur reported to be very efficacious for the cure of general debility, as well as for the relief of diseases of the nervous system extremely common, it is said, among the apparently robust and healthy inhabitants of the neighbouring mountainous districts.

The ruins overlooking Hassan Kale are as usual said to be Genoese.

If really possessed of all the forts and castles

attributed to it, and extending from Trebizonde to Tabreez in Persia, the Republic must have ruled—which there is no evidence whatever for supposing that it did—an enormous territory.

The Hassan Kale ruins are in reality of very ancient date, and a Pagan altar lying on the ground in the Acropolis, at least justifies a belief that they were an Armenian stronghold previously to the conversion of that nation to Christianity. Turkish tradition states that this remarkable implement was in the place where it now lies long anterior to the Mussulman occupation of the country; but the fort was used by the Ottomans till it was destroyed and dismantled in 1828 by General Paskievitch.

The foundations of the stately though extremely narrow bridge, like a bent bow, spanning the Araxes, is attributed to Darius Hydaspes.

Close by and at the village of Keupri-Keui, where the roads to Tabreez and Kars branch off, are the ruins of a large Caravanserai, built of huge blocks of solid stone and in the rich Saracenic style.

Each side was defended by four round towers, and over the doorway are placed some very beautiful arabesque carvings.

Ever presenting the same bare, solemn, though often extremely grand scenery, the road to Kars crosses over the Soghanli Dagh. It passes close to the picturesque ruins of Zevin, situated on the summit of a commanding and isolated rock overlooking a rapid stream flowing down to the Araxes through a dark and narrow gorge, and winds into the vast plain in which the celebrated fortress is situated.

Kars, whose great fame and renown extends throughout the whole of Asia, and even to the far-distant bazaars of British India, was without doubt surrendered to the Russians by treachery; but being in every way a position of such vital importance to the Muscovites for their future operations against Turkey, or for the protection of their flank in the long-hoped-for advance on Herat, it was their intention to get possession of it at any price.

The officer commanding the artillery on the occasion of its surrender was a nephew of

Yussouf Pasha, who sold Varna to the Emperor Nicolas in 1828.

Although educated at Woolwich, and living for such a length of time in England as to speak our language with equal fluency and correctness, it was firmly believed by Mucktar Pasha that this civilised and enlightened Turk had long been in communication with the Muscovites on whose general staff his first cousin was at the time serving.*

When the town was taken, it was gently pillaged; the Russian soldiers drank all the medicine in the hospitals in any way resembling alcoholic intoxicating beverages; the pockets of the sick were searched or picked, and a Prussian doctor declared positively that as he lay fever-stricken in his bed, all his gold was abstracted, not by soldiers, but by Russian officers.

Nothing can be more probable than such a story. Many years ago, in the Crimea, after the conclusion of peace in 1856, having slept in the same room with a very well-mannered

* I had this from the lips of Mucktar Pasha himself.

Muscovite Colonel, at Bagchi Serai, where I had gone with a brother officer on a few days' leave, we only awoke up in the morning to find that our pleasant friend, the field-officer, had started for, God knows where, before daybreak, and taken everything of ours on which he could lay hands with him.

Luckily, we slept in our clothes, or he would have left us naked; for the Russians are notorious thieves; and the Emperor Alexander said that his admirals would have stolen all his line-of-battle ships if they only knew where to put them.

As soon then as they had picked their pockets, the Russians, turning all the sick and wounded who were able to walk, out into the cold, told them to go to Erzerum.

In the depth of winter, and when the snow was lying so thickly, that the white and monotonous prospect was unvaried by even a single spot of any colour, calculated to variegate in the least the tedious hue covering every height as well as every road and valley,—two thousand maimed or fever-stricken Turks were given half-

a-crown a piece (or a sum equal to it), and told to walk in a country like Switzerland to a place one hundred and twenty miles off.

Except for a person who has visited Armenia in the month of December, and who knows what icy blasts, what intense cold, what steep and rocky tracks (for roads are not the expression by which they should be designated) those woe-begone castaways would have to face before reaching the distant gates of Erzerum,—it is difficult to realise from a mere description all the horrors of a journey which even for a strong, healthy, and well-fed man, copiously wrapped up in very warm clothes, is an expedition by no means free from considerable trials, while it is often attended with actual danger.

The way—never more than a track, winding across, or among spurs of mountains, or through dismal valleys overtopped on every side by rugged rocks—becomes in winter a rough and irregular trench hollowed out of high snow-banks, ever liable to be half-filled by those sudden drifts which blind and overwhelm the luckless traveller on whom they pour.

These drifts often stream down when they are not at all expected. The air, perhaps, is balmy and mild, and a bright sun, shining out of a real Italian sky, sends back a confusing glitter from the sparkling snow spread thickly over mountain, rock and dale. The scene, unspotted by even a hedge, a building, or a tree, is productive of feelings of extreme loneliness; and the tired beholder of such dismal and extensive prospects delights at the appearance of any moving object. It is a distraction for him.

Suddenly a gentle breeze smarts the face and hands, then as it grows and grows in force, and before a quarter of an hour has passed away swells into a gale of wind, the little particles of ice, rising all round like columns of sand, strike fiercely on the eyeballs. The air becomes so obscure and dim, that a man cannot distinguish where the snow ends and where the sky begins, and the temperature gets so painful to the joints and limbs that even several coverings of felt and fur are an insufficient protection, (except for a few hours at a time) against a cold

which, without the least exaggeration, may be described as terrific.

Every one was astonished that the so-called civilised Russians had turned out two thousand Turks, in order that they might swell the miserable population of Erzerum; but nobody with the least knowledge about an Armenian winter was surprised to hear that only three hundred and seventeen of these castaways never arrived at their destination.

What became of the rest it is very difficult to say; for, although some of them may have attempted to get to their homes by traversing the fastnesses among the higher ranges, it is hard to believe that they could have reached their goals in safety. More than two hundred of those who staggered or crawled into Erzerum lost their toes from frost-bite; and the others were in such a pitiable condition from hunger and fatigue, added to the pain of undressed and festering wounds, that their plight may be thought about as sorrowful and affecting in a high degree.

Some fifty of these weakly and half-frozen

skeletons, with lantern jaws, sunken eyes, and teeth exposed, and grinning from bloodless and contracted mouths, were received into the English Hospital at Erzerum, where one of them declared that out of thirty comrades who had left Kars in his company, no less than twenty lay down and died upon the road.

It was very touching to see the gratitude manifested by these unhappy and forlorn creatures to any one who felt for them ; and acts of gentleness or humanity never failed to draw forth pathetic and often even poetic expressions of thankfulness.

"I was about to die," said one of them ; "both the pain from my wound as well as from the cold eating my bones, had gone away. I desired no food, and was on the point of sleeping easily on the soft snow, when I was aroused by four strong Russian soldiers. They urged me to walk, but I moved not. They took me on their shoulders, with the gentleness of mothers lifting their own children, and ceased not to carry me till I rested near a fire in a house. I will never fire on their brothers any more."

The obedience and docility of the common Turkish soldiers; their respect for authority, added to the readiness and cheerfulness with which they obey orders, are so astonishing to an officer who has both lived among, and commanded troops of other nations, that this wonderful discipline, under a system so absurd as to bear every appearance of having been invented more for the destruction than for the encouragement of subordination, can only be accounted for by the training, acting for centuries on several generations, which I have repeatedly animadverted on in other parts of this work.

The Russian officers in Kars told the wounded Turks, when they turned them out of the hospital there, that they were compelled to do so in consequence of an insufficiency of accommodation; but previously to such cruel and rigorous treatment, having been well looked after, nourished, robbed, and lodged, they speak of the generosity and humanity of their conquerors in terms of the very highest praise.

The common Turks, ever accustomed to

harshness and ill-usage, are always moved by the least kindness or attention. I believe them to be the finest material for soldiers in the world, and I am quite certain, that had the army of Armenia been commanded by English officers; had the soldiers been fed, and had there been a sufficiency of transport—that the Russian mob would never have prevailed against it; that men would not have wounded themselves by scores rather than remain in the ranks; and that a whole army, as at Devaboyoun, would not have walked (not run) away, without even attempting to resist some battalions of Muscovites firing at a few yards distance into their backs.

Different from the usual civilian spectator of battles, who gives wise counsels to the generals; sustains without much injury the bursting of shells in his eye; and often, like Napoleon at the bridge of Lodi, even leads on the grenadiers himself, note-book in hand,—I can only boast of having withstood a charge—not of Cossacks,—but of Pashas, Effendis, and Beys, who shouting to the men, "Do as I tell you, and not as

I do," were the very first of all to run away as hard as ever their horses could carry them.

"'Tis well for ye to talk," muttered an old Turk, looking disdainfully at his chiefs galloping to the rear. "Ye have all six legs" (to run away with), "but I have only two."

"Come on," is what leaders say to soldiers; but, except in Turkey, I never heard an officer asking them to "go on;" and I greatly doubt if any men in the world would do so unless their commander led the way.

From what I myself witnessed, I am quite convinced that if a detailed account is written of the privations, ill-treatment, misery and exposure undergone by the much-to-be-pitied Turks fighting in Armenia, not only in defence of their own fatherland, but also without doubt the battles of England, it will equal in horrors the sufferings of the French army in its retreat from Moscow, as they have been so touchingly described by Ségur, Wilson, Alison, or Thiers.

The villages were abandoned in many parts of the country; and unable to obtain better accom-

modation, I have seen frost-bitten men forced to take shelter in damp caves or cellars, where, covered with maggots creeping from out of wounds; and teased and worried in their last moments by gangrene and mortification preying on their vitals, they lay very still and quiet on the cold ground.

These were fearful sights, which it is impossible to forget, and which even now I cannot touch upon without a thrill of disgust.

In 1828 General Paskievitch, an astute politician as well as a commander of the highest merit, raised a body of Turkish cavalry out of the conquered people, dazzled, like all Orientals, by that success which, in their eyes, gives an indisputable right to authority, and before which they are ever ready to bow with a subservience quite as useful for military purposes as either attachment or fidelity.

To a person unacquainted with the Eastern mind, such an expedient, above all at such a time, would appear extremely dangerous; but

an appearance of strength invariably impresses Orientals, who, quite accustomed to submit without repining to whoever is powerful enough to impose his yoke upon them, will, as a natural consequence of their peculiar idiosyncrasies, fight bravely enough for people only quite recently their deadly enemies.

A large part of the column which invaded Armenia and took possession of Erzerum, was composed of Mussulmans as loyal and obedient, under Imperial officers, as any other soldiers of the Czar; and there can be no doubt whatever that the recent capture by the Muscovites of provinces populated by handsome, stalwart, and temperate families of very docile and hardy peasants, will add in the space of a year or two a superb additional force to the already formidable army threatening the final conquest of Turkey from that side.

The seizure of that commanding strategical position, the trilateral of Armenia, is a menace to India, Persia, and Turkey; and our submission to such unjustifiable violence has placed in the hands of our enemies enormous resources,

whose significance is as yet not quite fully appreciated.

Erzerum, Kars, Olti, Bayazid, and in fact every other town which I have visited in Armenia, bear in their general aspect, as well as in the construction of their buildings, an exact resemblance to each other. There is always a citadel and acropolis situated in a more or less commanding position; but as neither a tree nor a shrub is anywhere to be seen, they all present a rugged, forlorn, and very uninviting appearance to a traveller.

In the centre of Kars, the ruined Turkish citadel—captured by Timour the Tartar, Nadir Shah, "the Persian robber" who rifled Delhi, and several other thieves, generals, and adventurers too numerous to mention—overlooks a winding river escaping through a stony gorge among the heights of black basaltic rocks on which the modern fortifications have been raised.

It is characteristic of the vapid Turks that all the fortifications and works made by the Russians at Gumri or Alexandropol, with a

view to forming a basis of operations for their long-cherished designs on Kars, were constructed out of timber brought to them from the Soghanli forests. Ever looking forward and preparing for another blow, the Russians secure and strengthen each successive conquest; while the weak and disorganised Turks, uninstructed by misfortune, think only of the present moment, and seem quite unaware of what without doubt is in store for them before very long, unless they both obey and trust to England.

Not far from Kars, in the direction of Alexandropol, are situated the ruins of Ani, by far the most interesting remnant of antiquity in the whole of Armenia. Ample details of its history and architecture have been published by Hamilton, Porter, Smith, and Dwight, as well as in the "History of Armenia," written in French by St. Martin, an Armenian by birth.

Here, on a cliff overhanging the rapid and foaming Arpachai, the traveller is awed and impressed by the sight of a Christian town built in a style altogether peculiar to itself;

almost unknown to archæology; and now in nearly exactly the same condition in which it was left by its destroyers eight hundred years ago!

It is defended by massive walls, in many places fifty feet high, and beautifully constructed with large blocks of yellow stone, hewn so artistically, and fitted so well, as to present an appearance of exquisite symmetry and evenness.

It is embellished by crosses and other striking ornaments in black stone. Gateways blocked up by fallen ruins can still be seen, and where the commanding promontory, on which it rises, joins the flat table-land, stately towers still frown in lonely and dismal grandeur.

The remains of a noble palace of the Armenian kings, as well as of the great cathedral built in the form of a Latin cross, are, with the exception of their roofs, in a good state of preservation.

Numerous Armenian inscriptions would enable an archæologist, learned enough to read the ancient Armenian language, so en-

tirely different from the modern and vulgar tongue as spoken in the country at the present day, to worm himself into the secrets of these time-honoured and even classical stones.

Here both the public and private buildings are indicative of the wealth, address, and enterprise of their constructors, as well as of the ancient glory and once imposing grandeur of a race which, although reduced to the most abject slavery in the immediate neighbourhood of its noble capital, has left, in defiance of the elements as well as of the destructiveness of barbarians, an indelible mark defying time itself.

In consequence, however, of heaps of rubbish and other impediments, it is impossible to examine closely some of the elegant traceries and exquisitely twisted beadings encircling the windows and cornices on the ornamental exteriors of buildings, almost as majestic as the famous Acropolis of Athens.

At about the time in which Moses of Khorene lived, the city of Ani was the capital of the Pakradian branch of Armenian kings, on

whom, after the conquest of the country by the Arabian Kalifs, a tributary crown was conferred.

In the tenth century, a branch of this family, of whom pleasing traditions exist in the folklore of the poor peasants to the present day, was highly respected by the Mussulman governors of Armenia.

It was this dynasty which, in the tenth century, founded the kingdom of Kars; and although a certain King of Ani, in hopes of protecting his unhappy subjects against the yearly-increasing destructiveness of Turkish invasion, bequeathed his kingdom to the Emperor of Constantinople, it is certain that the fear entertained by the latter at that period for the Sythians (as the Tartars were called by the Hellenes) effectively prevented his interfering in any way with the inheritance.

In a city called Ardzea, and supposed to have existed near the modern Erzerum, no less than eight hundred Christian churches are said to have been levelled with the ground.

A short time afterwards the kingdom of

Armenia was annihilated, and the spirit of the people broken by the philosophical Alp Arslan. He sacked Ani, slaughtered its inhabitants, and erected several mosques, whose remains still mingle with and embellish this city of the dead.

The author of this crime was punished. He fell by the hand of an assassin. "In my youth," said he, before he expired, "I was advised by a sage to humble myself before God, to distrust my own strength, and never to despise the most contemptible foe. I have neglected these lessons, and my neglect has been deservedly punished. Yesterday, as from an eminence, I beheld the numbers, the discipline, and the spirit of my armies; the earth seemed to tremble under my feet. I said in my heart, 'Surely thou art the King of the world, the greatest and most invincible of warriors. These armies are no longer mine, and in the confidence of my personal strength, I now fall by the hand of an assassin.'" "Alp Arslan," says Gibbon, "possessed the virtues of a Turk and a Mussulman; his voice and stature commanded the

reverence of mankind; his face was shaded with long whiskers, and his ample turban was fashioned in the shape of a crown. The remains of the Sultan were deposited in the tomb of the Seljukian dynasty; and the passenger might read and meditate this useful inscription: 'Oh ye who have seen the glory of Alp Arslan exalted to the heavens, repair to Maru and you will behold it buried in the dust.'

"The annihilation of the inscription and the tomb itself more forcibly proclaims the instability of human greatness."

CHAPTER VI.

THE KOORDS.

The Koords.—Their Wild and Martial Aspect.—An Armenian who did not like them.—They have no History.—The Women pitching a Camp.—Regular Amazons.—Portable Nurseries.—Their Free and Roving Life.—Their Origin.—Xenophon, Strabo, and Polybius mention them.—Koordish Tribes on the Borders of Afghanistan.—Their Respect for their Chiefs.—Conversion from Idolatry.—Idris, the Turkish Historian, brings them under Turkish Rule.—His Method.—Despotic Government of the Koordish Chiefs.—Turks possess the Art of Governing.—Preference given to Turkish Rule.—Ravages of the Koords.—The Koords a Barrier to the Empire.—Their Wars with the Turkish Pashas.—Some Tribes do not acknowledge the Sultan.—The Severities practised on them.—Treacherous Seizure of Koordish Chiefs.—Koord Ismail Pasha hated them.—Mr. Brant.—A Description of the fearful Condition of the Armenians exposed to Koordish Depredations.—Reports of Consuls, Travellers, and Missionaries.—Armenians flee to Russia for Protection.—Neighbourhood of the Russians represses the Koords.—Murder of Doctor Schultz.—Strip the English Consul.—A common Occurrence.—The fearful Condition of the wretched Armenians living among them.—The Koords at Home.—Their friendly Manners with an English Guest.—Habitations.—The Chief's Daughter.—Immorality of the Women.—Their savage Character.—Joubert.—Child-Murders.—A Koordish Dinner-party.—Every European a Doctor.—Koordish Civilities and Notions.—Their good Qualities.

CHAPTER VI.

THE KOORDS.

JOURNEYING alone along the wild mountains between Kars and Bayazid, I first became acquainted with the celebrated Koords, whose feudal system of government and aristocratic manners assimilate them to a great extent with the Bosniak Mussulmans, living at the very opposite side of the Ottoman Empire.

It appears to me that the modern Koord differs very little from the swarms of light horsemen who resisted so successfully the arms of the Crusaders.

He is mounted on a hardy, spirited, and well-bred horse, capable of enduring the extremes of both fatigue and hunger. His saddle

is decorated with every imaginable kind of caparison or ornament, which dangles down towards the ground.

His flowing garments of the brightest and most fantastic hues, his voluminous turban of a sombre colour, his long flowing locks reaching half-way down his back, his immense moustachios, black and piercing eyes, insolent expression and proud display of pistols, knives, yataghans, scimitars, blunderbuss, long gun, and sword, besides an enormous spear about twelve feet long, ornamented (instead of a flag like that of an European lancer) with a bundle exactly resembling in size and shape an ordinary football, from which several strings or streamers are dependent—give him a truculent and aggressive aspect; quite justifying the remark of an Armenian, who, looking after one of them and getting easier as the distance increased between them, said in a very solemn and impressive tone: "You may laugh if you please, but were you to meet that fellow alone, all your courage would evaporate.'

Nobody has ever attempted to write a history

of the Koords, because they are as destitute of annals as the wolves and jackals among whom they have lived in the high mountains from immemorial time.

Although some of them have made permanent settlements in villages, which they generally share with Armenians, the great body of the nation is nomadic, and wanders about in order to procure pasture for their large herds and according to the variations of the yearly seasons.

In summer they are to be found living under black tents in the highest of the mountain ranges, which they leave when the temperature becomes too cold, and when the snow falls thickly on the places where they have spent the warm weather.

It is wonderful to see the rapidity with which they break up their camps and hurry off to some more convenient ground. Long practice has made them perfect in the art of castrametation; and the women, constantly thumped and cuffed by their masters, display infinitely more celerity in packing the baggage, loading the bat-animals,

and striking or pitching the tents, than any Lascars whom I have ever seen in my Indian marching days.

The sight of a band of roving Koords, wandering in single file along the ledge of a precipice overlooking a roaring brook, winding among rocks down the side of a steep mountain-side, or marching through one of those dark little valleys enclosed all 'round by overshadowing and dismal snow-capped heights, with which the Armenian highlands are everywhere indented, carries the imagination of a traveller back to the days of Abraham.

The women, although as bigoted Mussulmans as any of the most backward and ignorant inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, never cover their faces; but ride among the men, to whom they talk in the loud and boisterous tones invariably employed by any of these savages indulging in the pleasures of conversation.

In all the hordes which I passed, the ladies were armed almost as copiously as the men; and a long gun often hung over the fair shoulders of a damsel, who seemed to wield her

spear with all the ease aud dexterity of a well-drilled lancer. Children of the most tender years, as well as aged and wrinkled hags, managed their horses with perfect address; and instead of toys, the smallest boys amused themselves by fiddling, as they rode along, with yataghans or pistols.

Very little children were carried in bags fastened behind the saddles. Having heard so much about the barbarous character of these wild and untamed tribes, the first impression produced by such an unusual sight made me shudder at what I thought a string of human heads hanging as ornaments from the saddle-cloth; but the munching of bread by little mouths, or the contortions of little faces from violent crying, showed that the occupants of these locomotive nurseries were just as well cared for and comfortable as our English baby-boys and girls in stationary establishments of the same nature.

Indeed, the beautiful lines in the "Castle of Indolence" apply exactly to their free and happy life, from which the cares and jealousies, as

well as the disgusting maladies of civilised life, seem equally banished:

> "And pastured on from verdant stage to stage,
> Where fields and fountains fresh could best engage.
> Toil was not then: of nothing took they heed
> But with wild beasts the sylvan war to wage,
> And o'er vast plains their herds and flocks to feed.
> Blest sons of nature they! true golden age indeed."

The origin of the Koords goes back to the very highest antiquity; and although they all speak either Turkish or Persian, the language in common use among themselves, and which they call Koord, is said by Von Hammer to be derived from an Indian stock.*

Both Strabo and Polybius mention them as excellent archers, horsemen, and thieves; while in the Greek name of Carduchi they are constantly brought under the notice of the reader of the "Anabasis." Their manner of making war seems, since those days, not to have undergone, any more than their roving habits, the slightest change; and when Xenophon, like the Turks

* They are casually mentioned by De Guignes and Volney. The former ignorantly confounds them with the Lazes.

in more recent times, tried to engage them, they (in the words of the fourth Book of the "Anabasis") "left their houses, and with their wives and children fled to the mountains, where they had an opportunity of supplying themselves with provisions in abundance."

When attacked in the high places where they had taken refuge, they "rolled down vast round stones, each a ton in weight, with others both larger and smaller. These being dashed against the rocks in their fall, the splinters were hurled every way, which made it absolutely impossible to approach the road."

As shepherds, warriors or thieves, the Koords, far from being peculiar to the country marked in our atlases as Koordistan, are met wandering with equal freedom throughout a large part of Asia Minor; and they rove through the territory of the Turks as well as through that of the Persians, in which they are found on the frontiers of Afghanistan.

Each district is paternally governed by a chief, who in his turn acknowledges the supreme authority of the head of the clan to which his

people belong, and to whom he owes military service, according to a kind of feudal tenure.

The reverence of the Koords for these chiefs is unbounded, and partakes of a religious character. Nowhere, not even in the courts of the greatest potentates, will be seen a respect so servile or an obedience so implicit as that which the Koordish Shake exacts from his followers, who regard him with such awe that a hair dropped from his head is cherished by them as a relic or talisman worth preserving.

Converted from idolatry to the Mussulman faith shortly after the first appearance of that religion, the Koords were not reduced to even nominal subjection till their country was overrun by Sultan Selim.

Idris, the celebrated Turkish historian, who spoke the Koordish language, was sensible enough to perceive, that in order to soften the hostility of such a people to any interference with their hereditary rights, or rather wrongs, it was necessary, above all things, to respect both the prejudices of the nation and the authority of the much-loved and revered chieftains.

He accordingly worked with great tact and perseverance, and established as much organisation among such wild, suspicious, and savage tribes as they were capable of receiving.

Possessed of that keen knowledge of human nature, solely obtainable by an intimate acquaintance with men placed in those different social positions by which diversity of character is alone formed—he, with exquisite tact, succeeded in attaching to the Porte, as faithful vassals, several clans of these proud, bloodthirsty and ferocious Highlanders.

Had they been dealt with in any other manner, they would, instead of friends, have been made implacable and troublesome enemies.

The Government of the Turks, so essentially democratic as by its maxims of policy to annihilate any class or order of men likely either to dispute or hamper in the slightest degree the supreme authority of the Sultan, is certainly altogether inapplicable to these pastoral people, whose chiefs, proud of their lineage, and even pretending to trace their pedigrees in a direct and unbroken line from Noah, have

always governed despotically, and by no other claim than the undisputed title of hereditary right.

For good or for evil, the Turks, like the Romans, possess in a high degree the art of commanding; and as vassals, or tributaries, or allies, have subjugated savages who constantly defied the arms of more civilised nations; and whose conquest by Russia in later years has only been effected by ruthless cruelty, massacre, and extermination.

Whenever they have been strong enough to do so, the Ottomans, by the force of their arms — have without doubt, reduced peoples and kingdoms under their iron sway; but whenever such violence has been thought inexpedient, they have displayed so much tact in their dealings with the inhabitants of distant and mountainous provinces, that the latter doing duty as excellent guards of the extensive frontiers of the Turkish Empire, have ever preferred the unmeddlesome and easy rule of the neighbouring Pashas to that of their more polished neighbours.

The savage independence of Koordistan long formed a powerful barrier against Persia; but in more recent times, and when the power of the weak Turkish executive became incapable of making itself felt beyond the konac of the Pasha representing it, the ravages of the Koords among the mountains of Armenia increased to such an alarming extent that large numbers of Armenians fled from their homes and sought refuge and protection in the territories of the Czar.

For months, and even years together, the Koordish chief of some petty fortress waged open war with the Turkish Pasha of a neighbouring town. As a general rule, however, these operations were not very bloody. At the siege of Topra Kalé, where, in the beginning of this century, Timour Beg, during the space of five months, held out with great courage and determination against the forces of the Pasha of Bayazid, the artillery fire of the Turks only succeeded in wounding a cur dog and killing a fowl belonging to the garrison of the fort.

Such hostilities were very trying to the

neighbouring inhabitants, forced to submit to the excesses of both parties, by whom they were robbed and outraged in a manner altogether heartless and incredible.

The Sultan—although successful in mastering the rebellious and troublesome chiefs in parts of the country—is still compromised by tribes who do not acknowledge his authority, and who cross and recross from Turkish into Persian territory, according as they find either one or the other most convenient for pillage.

These robbers, when caught, have occasionally been treated with odious severity by both the Turks and the Persians.

Many of them have been roasted, impaled, or burnt alive; but any cruelty or even disection, prompted by a knowledge of anatomy so profound as to be able to operate with wonderful success on the most sensitive portions of the human frame, have failed to change the shocking reputation of a nation in which the most evil propensities, according to our notions, are considered the highest and most manly forms of human virtue.

At different times, Koordish Shakes or chiefs, treacherously seized by the Turks, have been sent in chains to Constantinople; and during the siege of Kars, in 1855, their fellow-countrymen assembling in great numbers on the mountains, threatened, unless these captives were at once allowed to return home, that they would cut off communication between Erzerum and the sea.

The Beys were liberated in consequence of this menace; but, since then, several little wars have taken place between the Pasha of the latter town, as well as the Governor of Bayazid, and their troublesome and apparently irrepressible neighbours.

All attempts to bring them under regular control have proved quite fruitless; for although plundering in the vicinity of Ismael Pasha's camps, during the last war, and serving nominally under his orders—that old warrior often said that he wished the whole pack of them in Jehanum, a destination to which they were no doubt consigned in the prayers of the unfortunate Armenians exposed to their wicked caprices.

Mr. Brant, for many years English Consul at Erzerum, has exposed the disgraceful system by which, from immemorial time, the Koords, who inhabit few villages permanently, are allowed to live upon the cowardly, unarmed, and wretched Armenians during the winter.

The neighbourhoods of Moush and Van have been continually the scenes of murder, robbery, kidnapping of women, or cattle-lifting; and the indisposition more than the inability of the Turkish Government to protect its Christian subjects in these remote and exposed districts, has caused thousands of Armenian families, all naturally burning with hatred against their tyrants, to emigrate, within the last twenty years, into Russian territory.

These stampedes have been greatly encouraged by Muscovite agents travelling about the country in the guise of doctors; for the Imperial administration is well aware, not only of the great advantage of an increase to a thrifty, robust, industrious, and very loyal population, but also of the utility of gaining

the sympathies of the Christian inhabitants of that part of Asiatic Turkey.

Numbers of destroyed churches have been rebuilt by subscriptions, and money sent back from Russia; but I have before pointed out that, no matter to what part of the earth they may be driven, the sympathies of the scattered Armenian people are ever extended to the fatherland.

In the neighbourhoods of Moush, Van, and Bayazid, the commonest protection of life and property does not reach beyond a few miles' distance from those towns. The most affluent families may be reduced to beggary in a few hours by the depredations of Koords; and it often happens that villages are so completely gutted that nothing is left beyond the bare walls.

The reports of consuls, of the American missionaries resident in these places, as well as the accounts of numerous travellers who have remained long enough to know anything about their social and material conditions, tell a never-ending and eternal story cf Turkish apathy,

Koordish violence, and Armenian desolation and oppression.

Different descriptions are given by no doubt very honourable and honest philosophers, who, travelling hurriedly through Armenia, know no more of its actual condition than a man crossing over England in a balloon might be expected to know about the geological peculiarities of that island.

Before the late war, during that war, since that war, and even at the present moment, the same lawlessness and reckless destruction of life and property are allowed full play.

Fresh emigrations of Armenians into Russia have taken place; and the Koords, by way of revenging themselves for the recent successes of the Muscovites, are, it is said, wreaking their fury on the wretched Christians who stay behind.

Short telegrams in the newspapers inform their readers that some Koordish tribes are plundering near Moush or Van; but men reading such information, little know the real significance of those condensed and pithy paragraphs.

The neighbourhood of the Russians has considerably broken the power of the Koords; wherever there is an European Consul, a certain degree of security reigns in the neighbourhood; but in all those wild and remote or mountainous districts, where they are left entirely to themselves, and not over-awed by any fear of reprisals, it is unsafe, unless attended by a very strong escort, to venture among them.

The celebrated geographer, Dr. Schultz, the discoverer of the city of Semiramis, on the borders of Lake Van, was sent into the country of the Koords by the French Government, for the purpose of exploring and writing a history; but having visited some orpiment mines believed by the natives to contain gold, it was thought that he would return at the head of an army.

Having publicly made scientific observations, drawings of some castles, as well as notes of all that he had seen, the suspicions of the chiefs were strengthened; and notwithstanding the valuable presents with which he endea-

voured to propitiate the Shakes and Beys, he fell a victim to their treachery, and was barbarously murdered.

Several years ago, Mr. Abbott, the English Consul at Erzerum, was, on his journey to that place from Bayazid, attacked by a party of Koords, close to a Koordish village named Diadin, on the direct road to Tabreez,—and where I once passed the night. The Consul, a determined man, who did not understand joking, fired his pistol at the first Koord who came near him. It missed, very fortunately; and the latter, lance in rest, unhorsed the diplomatic officer. He was then stripped perfectly naked, and soundly flogged, while his Armenian servants and Turkish guards, without taking any part in the quarrel, or giving any cause for offence, begged for absolution *in articulo mortis*.

The horses and baggage were all carried away, the whole party stripped stark naked; and burning with rage, although shivering with cold, the representative of a nation on whose flag the sun never sets, had to beg a shirt and pair of trousers to hide his shame.

The Koords rode off, hooting and jeering; and although the Vali was obliged to pay a pecuniary compensation, the authors of this outrage, secure and invulnerable among their high mountains, laughed equally at the fury of a British Consul and at the threats of a Pasha and a Wuzeer.

When I was in the country, some Koords riding proudly into an Armenian village, quartered themselves according to their usual custom upon the inhabitants. After having regaled his followers, as well as their animals, with such victuals and refreshment as the place provided, the chief of the party, the son of a well-known Shake, whose name I have forgotten, requested that a young girl of great personal attractions, only recently married to a near relative of the owner of the house in which he was being entertained so hospitably, might come, and, as he expressed it, kiss his noble hand.

Such a ceremony is altogether contrary to custom; for although Armenian women, as a mark of great respect and confidence, press their

lips to the back of a Christian stranger's hand, such a salutation is never under any circumstances offered to a Mussulman.

The haughty chief would listen to no excuses, and terrified at the furious threats of his followers, the unarmed and timid Armenians were compelled to bring the weeping girl in among the Koords.

Equally devoid of shame or pity, this young ruffian, amid the laughter of his obscene followers, accompanied by the groans and lamentations of the Armenians, treated the cringing Christian girl with a cynical brutality most revolting even to think of.*

Whatever may be said against the rule of the Russians—and I have already pointed out that the Armenians have many and serious grievances against them—is it possible that any people with the hearts of men and women should prefer a government where such hideous turpitudes are unpunished and even unrebuked,

* The treatment to which the beautiful daughter of an Armenian Priest, at Utchkalissa, was subjected by the Koords, is still more horrible.

to an administration under which at least their honour is protected?

These ignominious and shameful actions were not enacted in consequence of the disorganisation resulting from the country being in a state of war, but they are, on the contrary, no more than common episodes in Armenian life.

The concurring testimony of Armenians in different parts of the country, supported by the evidence of excellent American missionaries, quite incapable of exaggeration, would prove satisfactorily to the minds of an honest English jury, that all this is perfectly true; and that the life of an Armenian, subject to Turkish rule (I speak not of the Armenians of Constantinople, nor of the great towns, nor yet of the Catholic part of the population, usually under the immediate protection of Consuls) is one of extreme discomfort and degradation.

The condition of Koordistan is similar to that of the Highlands of Scotland a few hundred years ago.

There is no idea of law or of public order. As every little castle belongs to a kind of king,

occasionally taking the field and wandering about the country according to the bent of his inclination, it completely differs in organisation from every other part of the Ottoman Empire, except Bosnia, which, in consequence of its feudal system and numerous petty principalities, it greatly resembles in many respects.*

The tribes of Koordistan, with their pride, their pipers, their tartans, together with their love and veneration for their chiefs, added to their lust for plunder and ferocious manners, greatly remind one of the old Highland clans as they are deseribed by Sir Walter Scott.

Riding quite alone, and in front of my escort, among mountains over which there was no regular road or even track, I lost my way as night was coming on.

Between seven and eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, the circumjacent solitudes destitute of trees or other shade, were unbroken by the fixed abodes of men; because during winter the snow lies so thickly over their sinu-

* The Austrian occupation of Bosnia has caused changes which are equally feasible in Koordistan.

osities, that for several months in the year they are entirely uninhabitable.

Observing the glare of a fire among the shadows at some distance off, I rode towards it ; and before long the baying and barking of great dogs caused me to think that I had found a village.

It was, on the contrary, a Koordish encampment, where the black tents, the tethered horses and cattle, the martial aspects of the wild men appearing ever and anon as they passed and repassed the gleams of light shooting or flickering through the surrounding obscurity, added to the wild and jagged outline of the higher ranges visible in ghostly outlines against a dimly-spangled firmament,—made up a prospect so fascinating, that, notwithstanding the pains of fatigue, or the pangs of hunger, I stood quite still and admired it with all my heart.

Directed by their big cur-dogs, who jumped with ugly and ominous growls towards my horse's nose and tail,* as well as in unpleasant

* It is wonderful how the horses in Armenia defend themselves with all their four feet against the dogs.

proximity to my stirrups, several men, all armed to the teeth, came out, and asking who I was, where I came from, and where I was going to, became as suddenly silent when I whispered "*Soos*" ("Silence"), and motioning them to be still, requested an introduction to their chief.

The dogs were driven off, and while two men seized my horse by the bridle, and led him among the tents, the rest, with profound salutations and kisses on my boots, crowded round at both sides.

A roaring fire threw a bright glare over the marquees in the centre of the encampment; and from one of these a fine old man of noble aspect and commanding presence, with outstretched hand and smiling face, came forth.

"Kosh geldin Effindim" ("You are welcome, sir"), he cried. I shook his hand cordially, and answered, "Bouyouroun Effindim" ("At your service, sir").

Leading me into his tent, lined throughout with carpets of exquisite workmanship, he made me sit down by a comfortable fire.

The women and girls brought large cushions

covered with silk, on which the old man told me to rest my weary bones, because I had ridden without refreshment for man or horse, during thirteen hours. As the evening meal was being prepared they served us with fragrant tobacco and excellent black coffee, while all the Koords standing round outside watched very attentively, though from a respectful distance.

The roof of the tent was composed of black canvas; but its sides, after the manner of all such movable dwellings, consisted of rattans so thickly matted together as to present an appearance of basket-work.

The apartment in which I was entertained, and in which I slept, was separated from the space allotted to the ladies by a wall or screen of the same material as that with which the exterior of the tents are made; but this impediment not being more than four feet high, whenever I stood up I could look over it.

The women had not the least objection to being stared at. They had all beautiful and expressive black eyes, wonderfully thick and glossy hair, fine figures, very dark complexions,

and aquiline noses, generally disfigured with a gold ornament stuck or screwed into a hole bored through the nostril.

This ornamant is very common among the females of India; but nowhere else, except in the noses of the Koords, and occasionally of Armenian girls living among them, have I ever observed such an abominable fashion.

The chief's daughter, a blooming and extremely graceful and elegant girl of about seventeen years old, appeared, in consequence of the refinement and gentleness of her air and voice, altogether out of place among the rest of his rude family, whose hoarse voices and shrill laughter contrasted unpleasantly with her soft tones and radiant smiles.

She was still unmarried; the society of a coarse man had not then tainted her girlish charms; but ere this it is probable that she is as blatant and loud as the other noisy inmates of the tent.

When in the early morning the men drive out the flocks and herds to feed and pasture on the distant mountain-side, the camp is often

left entirely in charge of the women, who, assisted by their dogs and their voices, as well as by their formidable firearms, which they would not hesitate to use, are capable of defending it against all intruders.

They are nevertheless destitute of morality, for although very coy and retiring when any of the males belonging to the tribe are looking at them, their cupidity is such that, provided it can be risked with safety, they are at all times willing to sacrifice their chastity for gold.

The Koords show infinitely more kindness, benevolence, and tenderness to their horses than to their wives, who are regarded by them in the light of mere animals or breeding instruments. So accustomed are the women to this rigorous treatment, that they accept it as a matter of course; and although they may sigh when the freshness and charms of youth give place to an appearance incapable of inspiring any longer such love as a rough Koord may be capable of, they prepare without a reproach, or even a murmur, the bridal couch of a more youthful successor to their husband's pleasure.

This degradation of the women reduces them to the condition of mere animals, quite incapable of exercising any gentle or humanising influences on the society of which they form a part.

Entire strangers, as a general rule, to feelings of pity or compassion, the Koords carry on their wars with a ruthless ferocity altogether appalling.

The disgusting and obscene mutilation of prisoners, unfortunate enough to fall alive into their hands, as well as the savage manner in which they wreak their vengeance on the corpses of their foes, are a striking characteristic of the innate barbarity of the people.

Joubert, an agent of Napoleon's travelling through Koordistan, fell into the hands of one of these tribes, who treated him with such rigour and cruelty, that the wife of the chief, like a true woman, and full of compassion for the outrages and tortures inflicted upon him, succeeded very artfully in effecting his escape.*

* Joubert was an extraordinary favourite with women, and a celebrated street in Paris is called by his name.

Notwithstanding the courage of her nature, which could brave death for the defence of a man she loved, her only influence, like that of every other Koordish female, consisted in whatever ephemeral and fleeting affection might be momentarily warmed in the breast of some savage and capricious cut-throat.

Under such social conditions, in which the female is no more than a drudge or plaything, the natural softness and gentleness of the sex does not ameliorate in the slightest degree the brutality of the male. The woman, on the contrary, becomes contaminated; and, like an European courtesan, smarting under the contempt which she inspires, loses every characteristic of the feminine nature.

On the birth of a female child, the mother, feeling from experience what degradation is in store for her newly-born offspring, weeps and laments as soon as its sex is known; but the nativity of a boy is hailed with every demonstration of delight; for, then, she knows full well that when the wailing baby is a man, he will at least be free.

Feeling at the bottom of her woman's heart, the miserable, objectless, and degraded life in store for a little girl when she grows up, it is not, I am told, uncommon for Koordish mothers to so neglect their female children as to cause their death before they are many hours old.

However reprehensible and shocking, there is nevertheless something touching in these infant-murders; because beneath the untutored and savage brutality of such actions, may be discovered that innate and tender maternal love, which prefers the death to the dishonour of the child.

A small, round, wooden table, standing about six inches from the ground, having been brought in, it was soon covered with such delicacies as, according to the notions of the cheerful and hospitable Shake, formed the ingredients of an excellent dinner.

Being invited to take my place at this remarkable feast; I commenced, by means of a wooden spoon, to swallow a mess of barley-soup out of a bowl which was used in common by the great man himself, the ruler of the

feast, and four other chiefs or leading warriors who had been asked to meet me.

We sat with our legs doubled under us, and for fear that there might not be enough for all, gobbled as fast as possible, but nobody said anything. The soup being removed, a wooden dish filled with smoking vegetables and roast lamb was handed in; and with a view to signalise his friendship in a striking manner, the dirty old Shake, selecting an enormous lump of fat, and stuffing it in into my mouth, assisted its disappearance by means of his thumb.

Hiding my disorder as well as possible, I exclaimed, "Choke ai, Alla hum'd ul illa" ("The Lord be praised, but it is excellent!").

He then, with a laudable design of giving me still greater pleasure, repeated the operation a second time. It is in the nature of man to get accustomed to anything; but as it seemed to delight the Shake, and certainly did not do me any harm, each time that the pieces he fed me with, were finished, I stared him straight in the face, leant forward, and opening my mouth as

wide as ever my jaws would allow, prepared politely for another dose.

The people with whom I spent several years of my youth, held in great respect a person celebrated or notorious for excessive drinking; and the Koords, among whom a knowledge of the delights of that pastime is prevented by the precepts of Mahommed's religion, hold in equal admiration a man endowed by nature with a voracious appetite.

"The English are great soldiers," said the Shake; "I love the English;" but never having seen one before, he was evidently delighted at the discovery, that in addition to their other fine traits, they were capable of devouring incredible quantities of roast lamb.

The lamb was followed by boiled rice, mixed with a few raisins and spices, and cooked in very rancid and ill-smelling butter.

This disgusting dish is called a pillau, and eaten with a spoon, alternately laden with a kind of sour curd called Yow-ourt.

Afraid of losing the consideration of those with whom I sat at meat, I swallowed the

Yow-ourt and the pillau with as many hypocritical expressions or grimaces of satisfaction as those which had accompanied my consumption of lamb; and although half-choked, continued scraping the pots with the wooden spoon as long as there was anything left.

The old Shake was quite delighted at the success of his entertainment; and I have no doubt that in future, when he speaks of the English, he will add, in tones and expressions of admiration, that they are all immeasurable gluttons, and eat like Sultans; for it is nearly always from a single person or from an isolated fact, that men form their ideas of foreign nations.

Reclining on comfortable cushions after our eating-bout, I observed the appearance of my companions. They were all very good-looking men; their features were regular, their eyes full of daring, and their countenances, as far as I could judge, not in any way expressive of the wickedness and cruelty for which they are so renowned.

One of the party, a nephew of the Shake,

although a stalwart and healthy-looking young man of about thirty years of age, wanted me to give him some medicine for the relief of a weakness, whose complete eradication is warranted in the advertisements and pamphlets of our quack doctors; but for which, unfortunately, I had no specific in my pocket.

These people believe that every European is either a general, or a general practitioner, who can cure the most virulent organic or chronic complaints in the course of a few days or even hours; and if he goes away without relieving them, they are sometimes inclined to be very troublesome and importunate.

Only separated from the chief's daughter and the rest of the women by a very thin screen, I slept until it was broad daylight; and owing to the (in Armenia) unusual absence of either fleas or any other vermin—very comfortably.

Then, the horses being all saddled, I continued my journey, accompained by the hospitable Shake, who, as a mark of especial favour, rode in my company for a short distance through the mountains, and sent me on in charge of some

men to another detachment of his tribe, living under their tents about twenty miles off.

The Shake's horse had been caparisoned by his handsome daughter; but owing to her miscomprehension of the directions received from her father, a wrong bridle had been put on; he tore it off, and dashing it furiously at the damsel's head, bespattered her with every horrible expression on which he could lay his tongue.

Quite accustomed to such harsh treatment, the gentle and cringing girl only asked to be forgiven. I felt very sorry for her; and on leaving, gave her a piece of gold to wear as an ornament to her nose when she was married.

It is a picturesque sight to watch a cavalcade of Koords. The chief, rolled up in gaudy shawls, often covered with a cloak of very rich lace, his head enveloped in an enormous black turban, his legs encased in bright red boots, rides in the centre; while, both in front and behind, his retainers, clothed in the most variegated colours, and displaying antiquated arms of every shape and form, caracole briskly on their active and snorting horses. The black

turbans, shading their long moustaches and fierce black eyes, give them a weird and savage aspect; but the long lances, ornamented with huge black balls, from which hang down streamers of the same sombre hue, lend a certain air of pomp and splendour to their ride.

In the distance, and standing out in bold relief against the sky, the sight of those large and heavy ornaments topping the long lances of a body of Koords approaching an Armenian village, fills the wretched and unarmed inhabitants with excessive terror. Among those poor people—God help them!—the men who handle the spears have a very evil reputation, and whenever their fanaticism (for the ignorant Koords are excessively bigoted) is aroused, they fall on and slaughter Christians without mercy.

Sir Austin Layard mentions the undisguised contempt with which he was treated by a Koordish chief when that dignitary heard he was a Christian; and Mr. Morier, secretary of the English Embassy to the Court of Persia, when entertained by a Koordish Shake named Timour Beg, at Topra Kale, in

the valley of Alishkird, listened to the following insulting remarks from the mouth of his host: "These fellows, I hear, have neither pipes nor tobacco in their country. They are beasts."

Since those days, however, the Russians, having reduced to subjection several Koordish tribes, and even made excellent irregular cavalry out of the wild riders of which they are composed, their ideas of Europeans are more in accordance with what military Christians are, than what they would like them to be.

In consequence of this, any traveller, and above all an Englishman, might, *as far as I could judge*, wander about among them in perfect security, and with every prospect of being very well received.

During several days I journeyed through the highlands between Kars and Bayazid, and having frequently slept in encampments of Koords, I had every reason to applaud the respect and attention with which I was invariably treated.

Such as they had, they offered with open-handed and generous hospitality; and from what I was told afterwards, had any one injured me, between the time in which I gained the reputation of a notorious consumer of roast lamb and pillau in any of their encampments till I had again surfeited with some other people—the original proprietors of the said roast lamb and pillau would have revenged my death with a cruelty in every way equal to that with which the ingredients of the feasts to which I allude were massacred.

If the Koords are distinguished by the most execrable characteristics, it is certain that they are also possessed of some very fine and noble qualities, in which profound respect for their hereditary chiefs, to whom their affection and fidelity know no bounds, merits without doubt the warmest approbation.

If the humanising influences of civilisation; the excellent precepts of true religion, teaching a duty to one's neighbour as well as to one's self; together with a severe military discipline, of all things most conducive to good

order, regularity and virtue, were extended to these benighted savages, there can be no doubt that, in the course of a few years, the odious dispositions of the whole nation would be so entirely and completely changed that their present escapades would become a matter of ancient history.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KOORDISTAN HIGHLANDS.

A Notion.—Our Action against Russia.—Turks like Englishmen.—Protectorate of Asia Minor.—All Classes long for Reforms.—The Turkish Gentleman.—His noble Aspect.—Kaghisman.—Arrival in the Night.—Mustapha Bey.—Biblical Hospitality.—Popular Excitement at the Reception of a Guest.—The Salamlik or Parlour.—Ornamented with Arms.—Etiquette.—Ceremony of Turkish Receptions.—Europeans often Rude through Ignorance of Custom.—Montesquieu.—Respect for Prejudices necessary.—Excellent Dinner.—Noble Character.—Exalted Opinion of Mankind.—Armenians well treated in Kaghisman.—The Atrocities of Alishkird execrated.—All Accounts of Armenian Provocation perfectly False.—Interesting Conversation.—Wishes for Reform.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KOORDISTAN HIGHLANDS.

As it was my opinion, (which everything occurring since only confirms more and more,) that the very instant the Russians crossed the Pruth, England ought to have declared war, I have felt a peculiar interest in the action we might then have taken in Asiatic Turkey.

Trusting in England, looking to England, believing in England, the whole Turkish, and Koordish, and even Armenian population were ready to obey any Englishmen sent to their assistance. Then, and at that moment, we might, without offending any prejudices, and without the least danger of any Pasha, Effendi,

or Bey, daring even to hint a word of opposition, have raised a superb army which, without doubt, would have driven the Muscovite forces to the other side of the Caucasus.

Independently of interest, there are no European people so respected by the Ottomans as the English. Our gruff and surly manners to strangers, our habit of saying what we mean, and coming to the point at once without any prevarication, and our disinclination to give deferential salutations to people for whom we have no respect, are all regarded by the Turks with the most profound admiration. They see in these peculiarities a reflection of that intense pride inherent in their own character.

A Turk is what Thackeray would call a "thorough snob," for, notwithstanding all his pride of race and contempt for foreigners, there is nobody who grovels more before a great personage than he does.

Independently, then, of these peculiar manners, which certainly fit our countrymen in a special degree for dealing with Orientals,

the childlike confidence with which, at the outbreak of the war, the whole fixed and nomadic population of Armenia looked towards England for support, would have enabled us, with the approval of all men, to have taken the entire administration of Asia Minor into our hands.

In a short time, *and if drilled by Englishmen*, an excellently disciplined force of fifteen thousand cavalry, quite equal to our best Indian irregulars, might have been formed from among the Koords, only waiting for the summons to enlist by thousands in our service.

Almost in hearing of Moosa Pasha, who commanded them, and for whom they had neither that respect nor affection which a chief fit to rule and discipline such felons ought to inspire in their breasts, the Circassians openly asked why Englishmen were not sent to lead them; but had the fine, obedient, and docile Turkish peasant soldiers been placed under the command of some of our retired military officers, weary of loitering about the clubs, and who were as anxious and willing as they were fitted

for such service, the routs at Alajadagh, at Hassan Kale, or at Devaboyoun, would have never taken place.

The army of Kars would have done anything or gone anywhere under General Williams, whose name of Veeleeams Pasha is to this day known and revered by many a brave old soldier in different parts of Turkey.

The unbounded respect, affection, and confidence which would have been inspired in the minds of multitudes of men eating our salt, and leavened into a state of perfect discipline, subordination, and cohesion by a very small contingent of British infantry, cavalry, and artillery, would most certainly have enabled us to deal exactly as we pleased with Asia Minor.

Then would have been the time to speak, in determined and authoritative tones of real reforms.

The governing clique, the Pashas, Effendis, and Beys, would have been very quiet; and the population of Armenia, more convinced than ever of our good intentions, while public order was preserved by a well-paid, well-fed, and

well-disciplined force entirely devoted to us, would have hailed our administration with unbounded delight.

The Turks, as well as the Christians, long for justice; but it is almost certain that, had we shown a bold front in Armenia, the Muscovites would never have attempted its invasion. We might very easily have got the great mass of the people on our side, and so proved to the deadly incubus of Pashas, Effendis, and Beys, that English supervising officers, *supported by force,* were really a blessing to the country.

That would have been the kind of protectorate for Asia Minor, as it surely would have effected such popular and rational reforms in the general administration, that men of all creeds, fully perceiving their utility, would have supported us with all their hearts.

It is not in the large cities that pleasant and exemplary specimens of real Turkish gentlemen are to be found. There they are too often corrupted, either by demoralising associations or else by an extreme bigotry against and hatred of Christians; which cause them, notwith-

standing a certain grave and forced politeness, to be reticent and uneasy in their company.

It is only in towns situated in remote and distant parts of the country where such true noblemen, taught by a sense of their own importance how "to accost their equals without levity and their superiors without awe," are introduced to the observation of a European traveller.

Their fine and natural manners are ever full of dignity and grandeur; and the serene expression of their honest faces, shaded under voluminous turbans, shows that they are incapable of either mean or dirty actions.

A lying and deceitful person manifests that odious character in his deportment; but the good and honest man who knows no guile, impresses one in an instant with confidence and respect.

During part of a journey between Kars and Bayazid, the day's ride had been so long that it was more than two hours after sunset, when I arrived at the picturesque town of Kaghisman.

It is situated on the side of a mountain, and intersected by a deep ravine filled with shady trees and fragrant fruit-gardens, through which a foaming and noisy torrent, tumbling over the rocks in its course to the master stream of the Araxes in the vale below, disturbs all night the tranquillity of the place.

According to my custom when riding about Armenia, I had left my baggage in charge of its Turkish guard; and, accompanied by only a single Koord, it was very late and quite dark when the clattering of our horses' hoofs in the rocky and tortuous streets caused the inhabitants to come to their doors and windows, in order to see what strangers had arrived at that hour of the night.

On requesting to be conducted to a Han or Caravanserai (public establishments for the reception of travellers in Turkey), I was at once informed that such a course was impossible.

Mustapha Bey, a man looked up to by the inhabitants of Kaghisman, had given strict orders that all benighted wayfarers should be

brought to his house, a very large establishment, in which a ready welcome as well as a comfortable and generous hospitality were, with easy and equal politeness, extended to all men.

Surrounded with a troop of idlers or curious people, two of whom led my horse by the bridle, we were conducted in the direction of the Patriarch's house; and as we rode along, our following, constantly reinforced by a contingent from every door, grew by degrees into a procession so numerous that the hum and clamour of many voices interrupted the calmness in which, previously to our unexpected arrival, Kaghisman had reposed.

The massive gates swung open for our entry into a large court-yard, where I was welcomed by a handsome youth, the old man's best-beloved grandson; and led, by means of a stately flight of stairs, ornamented on either side with richly-carved and massive oak balusters, into the Salaamlik or presence-chamber of the excellent and benevolent Mustapha.

This apartment was lofty and spacious.

A roaring fire of huge logs blazed comfortably

and brightly in a large fireplace, exquisitely embellished according to Turkish taste.

Thick Persian carpets covered the floor; the walls and ceiling were composed of finely-carved cedar.

The old man, reclining negligently among an exuberance of silk pillows and cushions, was smoking dreamily a long chibouque. Some friends and neighbours, entitled by their positions to the honour, sat enjoying his hospitality. Several attendants and dirty fellows of the baser sort, separated from the great men by a row of rails, standing respectfully at a distance, watched with ceaseless and undivided attention everything that was taking place inside.

Texts from the Koran were posted in conspicuous positions all round; but—as the law of Mahommed forbids the use of pictures—blunderbusses, yataghans, scimitars, curved daggers like those used in India, and other fearful weapons of destruction or defence, wielded in former times, they said, by the ancestors of their present proprietors, embellished in tastefully arranged groups the surrounding walls.

The people of all nations have established certain forms of politeness by which the good-breeding of "every proper fellow and man of parts" is manifested.

In France it takes the shape of bowing and scraping; in England of not doing anything of the kind; but even before attempting to acquire the language of any country, it would be very useful to the comfort and pleasure of a traveller if he mastered these trivial points of etiquette, so much valued in all social intercourse, that their ignorant omission is very apt to give extreme offence where nothing except propitiation, friendliness, and courtesy were intended.

All Easterns, and perhaps Europeans too for the matter of that, are extremely sensitive about the observance of such civilities; and their non-performance is very apt to brand a visitor as an ill-bred and vulgar man.

Mustapha Bey, rising to receive, greeted my entrance with many very gracious salutations, repeated with similar urbanity by the assembled company.

In striking contrast to our European custom, an analogy with which would cause one to believe that the outward ceremonies of reception were at an end, it then became necessary, according to the habit of Turkish good society, for a new comer to make a separate salutation to each person in the apartment, everyone of whom is bound to return it with equal deference and respect.

To omit these repeated acknowledgments is considered an insult, slight, or affront by every one in the room; and the Western traveller who salutes the host and, with the intention of being very polite, makes a bow intended for everybody in general and nobody in particular, often remarks the sulkiness and incivility of the company, without being in the least aware that they are all very much offended with him.

"When I am in France," says Montesquieu, "I employ polite and obliging words to everybody; in England I never employ them to anyone; in Italy I pay compliments to everybody; in Germany I drink with everyone."

Whoever taking these most philosophical confessions to heart, endeavours to extend his complaisance so far as to try and adapt himself to the prejudices of whatever people he may happen to be thrown among—provided such indulgence is not too irritating or unpleasant to any preconceived ideas of his own—will find his intercourse with foreigners made much more agreeable by a knowledge of and compliance with forms; which although always insignificant in themselves, are nevertheless highly prized by those among whom they have developed into social customs.

Although he had himself finished his supper, the excellent old man, without even asking if I was hungry, provided me with a famous dinner, consisting of meat, fish, poultry, game, vegetables, and fruit in great abundance; and if compelled to use my fingers instead of a knife and fork, I was allowed to deal peaceably with all those festivities, instead of having any of them stuffed down my throat by the dirty fingers of a friendly Koord.

Except two or three journeys undertaken

during the course of a long life to both Erzerum, Bayazid, and Kars, the old Turk had never left the valley, which both he and his ancestors had inhabited for several generations.

His knowledge of the world being very small, he had formed ideas about mankind according to the benevolence and honesty of his own heart.

"Nearly all men are good," he said; "and the few who are not become so from bad usage and ill-treatment."

Impressed with these poetical ideas, he is an excellent man to know, for he is ever ready to lend money to anyone who wants it. An English officer passing through, borrowed a hundred Turkish pounds from him; and, although never having seen that gentleman before, he had not the least doubts about an honesty which was proved in a short time by the return of the money.

Although a complete stranger, he volunteered to provide me with whatever funds I might require.

I was assured that with larger or smaller sums, sometimes as loans and sometimes as charity, he assisted any travellers passing through his town. Notwithstanding such extreme and generous confidence in all men, the chief of his household declared that he had never been cheated; and that, although an advance made to a Russian Jew of Tiflis was for a long time looked upon as a bad debt, yet even that disbursement, if thrown upon the waters, had returned after many days.

In this case the eldest son, who often expostulated with the old man for his confiding liberality, frequently twitted him with the loss of his money.

Mustapha, however, true to his principles, only drew the conclusion that the Jew had either died or been killed; and when, months afterwards, the debt was honestly paid, he, without expressing the least pleasure or surprise, quietly ejaculated: "I knew he would."

He was perfectly tolerant, and extended his protection equally to everyone. The Armenians of the town assured me that, defended by his

authority, which, although not in any way official or connected with the governing posse, was greatly respected both in Kaghisman as well as throughout the surrounding mountains and valleys, they lived on very easy terms with their Mussulman neighbours; and that some of their hunted and persecuted countrymen and countrywomen from the plains of Alishkird had sought and found a refuge in Kaghisman.

Nobody execrated those frightful crimes more than poor old Mustapha; and when he spoke about them, which he often did, his eyes became dim, and his face sorrowful.

Indeed, all the Turks with whom I conversed, expressed extreme horror and detestation at such revolting turpitudes, which nobody for a moment attempted either to deny or even to palliate.

That the Armenians ever gave any provocation to the Koords, except such as might be caused by providing the invading Russians with provisions or welcoming them as friends and fellow-Christians, is so utterly false, and to

anyone acquainted with their cowardly and submissive natures, so extremely absurd, that it hardly merits the trouble of denial.

Still, as such misleading intelligence was by some means or other spread about in England, I made every inquiry on the subject, and never heard them accused of having injured anyone.

It was with great difficulty that I got away from Kaghisman; for this excellent old Turk was so hospitable that he pressed me to extend my visit over several days. He was never tired of talking; and as he, like many other Osmanlis of the class to which he belongs, clearly perceives the great advantages which the substitution of the Czar's government for that of the Sultan's would give to the Christian, and in many cases even to the Mussulman portion of his fellow-countrymen, his conversation and sentiments, as faithfully interpreted to me, were extremely interesting and worthy of attention.

He questioned me closely about the peculiarities and genius of the English government

in India; and ever believing, like Garibaldi, that all men, or at least the great majority of them, are good, ardently wished for the extension of a somewhat similar administration to the affairs of his own neighbourhood.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALISHKIRD AND ARARAT.

Plains of Passim.—Great Persian Road.—The Bridge-destroying Araxes.—The Delibaba Pass.—Grand and awful Prospect.—Mount Ararat, the Mountain of the Ark.—The Chaldean Worship of the Stars.—Striking Appearance of the Mountain.—Volcanic Remains.—Dr. Perrot.—Legends about the Ark.—Armenian and Koordish Superstition.—The Evidence on which they accept these Stories.—Moses of Khorene.—The Garden of Eden.—Ascents of Ararat.—Armenian Quibble.—Bayazid.—Its easy Capture by the Russians.—Advance of the Russians towards Delibaba.—Their sudden Retreat.—Mucktar Pasha falls upon them.—Shake Jellaleen invests the Russians left behind in Bayazid.—Treachery of the Koords.—Fiendish, disgusting, and wanton Massacre of Armenian Men, Women, and Children in Bayazid.—Age and Sex not spared.—All these Turpitudes witnessed by the Russians in the Citadel.—Turks and Koords fall on the Armenians.—The Presence of the Russian Staff-officer's Wife animates the Garrison, who hold out to the Last.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALISHKIRD AND ARARAT.

FROM the long and splendid Keupri Keui Bridge, whose massive foundations are said to have been constructed by old Darius Hydaspes, a dreary road or track runs in an almost continual straight line across the undulations of a monotonous and tediously-flat country, called the Plains of Passin.

It is the great Persian highway; and leads out to the village of Delibaba, situated at a distance of between thirty and forty miles from Hassan Kalé.

This level country is covered with splendid pastures; Turkish and Armenian villages may be counted by twenties; and in the back-

ground a large circuit of differently-sized, and for the greater part of the year, snow-capped mountains, stand up against the horizon on every side. The river is called, from the occasional fury of its current, the bridge-destroying Araxes; and the extremely narrow structure which, by means of numerous arches, spans it at Keupri Keui, presents at a distance the exact appearance of a strongly-bent bow.

Each time that I have passed through this dark and stupendous gorge of Delibaba, and whether its fantastic outlines were softened in the moon-light or bathed in the rays of a rising or a setting sun—I have admired the wild and solemn aspect of the place.

There are no trees and there is no verdure; but phantom peaks and overhanging cliffs, open at every turn of the road noble prospects; in which everything that conveys to the mind ideas of sublimity and grandeur predominates. It is about fifteen miles long in its entire length.

The entrance appears to have been cut by art through an enormous rock; and in many places

its windings are so narrow, that the traveller is forced to ride along the bed of a mountain-stream.

It is not beautified by the remains of ruins; but stones, placed in remarkable positions by the convulsions of nature, often appear in the distance like the mouldering battlements of ancient castles.

From the top of the pass above Dahier, a wonderful prospect is suddenly presented to the astonished traveller. The eye stretches, till it blinks with fatigue, over a fantasy of mountain and vale.

All is dark, dismal, melancholy, and awful; but I can compare it to no view which I have ever seen.

Heights of every form, beetling precipices standing in silent and lonely grandeur, and valleys so far down below us to appear liquid and indistinct in the distance, confuse the mind in its attempt to grasp the great picture at a single glance.

When first I looked upon this noble panorama the snow had melted off the mountain-tops.

As there were no trees and nothing green or pleasant to relieve the sight, everything was so evenly coloured with a brown and uniform hue, that the positions of intervening plains or valleys were, even with the aid of a telescope, imperceptible. It was like looking from a cliff upon the waves of a melancholy sea.

Towering above all, and soaring high up into a firmament so clear as at once to convey to the mind, or rather to the imagination, an idea of infinite space, a rugged and solitary pyramid of eternal snow dwarfs by comparison every neighbouring or visible headland. It is Mount Ararat.

The Turks call it Arghidagh, or Mountain of the Ark; the Persians, Koo-i-noo, or Noah's Mountain; and the Armenians, Massees, or Mother of the World.

Moses of Khorene pronounces it the middle of the world; and both Raumer and Hoff maintain that it is the central point of the great terrestrial line drawn from the Cape of Good Hope to Behrings Straits.'

It was also the central point of the Chaldean

worship of the stars. A neighbouring plain is still called Archnoisda, or the Foot of Noah, because it was here that the Patriarch got out of his ark; and the village of Argharee is named from two words signifying "the vine was planted;" as Noah first reared grapes there.*

Having seen the mountain of the Deluge from several different points of view, some of which looked up its actual sides, I am of opinion that it is from the pass above Daher that it appears in all its sublimity and ghostly grandeur, and that nowhere else on the face of the earth is there a mountain whose effects on the mind of the beholder can be compared to it.

Many other mountains in the world are much higher; but although Ararat is only 17,210 feet above the level of the sea, it soars without a rival or a neighbour—a solitary pyramid or cone, 10,876 feet over the flat plain in which it stands.

It is this circumstance which endows it with such overpowering majesty; because Mont Blanc, although a mountain of great height, is

* Haxthausen's "Trans-Caucasia."

surrounded by so many neighbouring glaciers of nearly equal elevation, that its excessive altitude is forgotten by comparison.

The Mountain of the Ark is, on the contrary, a lonely, eternal, and stately monument defying time and space; but at the end of the sultry summer months, when all the snow on the neighbouring heights has melted quite away, the white and dazzling winding-sheet gives something truly awful and terrific to its aspect.

Every rock upon Mount Ararat is volcanic; and masses of regularly melted lava, cinders, trachytic rock in various gradations of decomposition, present plain marks of the agency of heat. Fragments and ruins are so heaped on each other that it is impossible to talk of a regular distribution in strata of different kinds of rocks; but, although the masses as a general rule exhibit the characters of porphyry, the various natures of those of which the mountain is composed have been comprised by Dr. Frederic Perrot, Professor of Natural Philosophy in the university of Dorpat, under twelve different denominations.

As the superstitious Koords and Armenians of the neighbourhood believe that the ark, still painted green, and resting on the extreme summit, is guarded by Jins, devils or evil spirits,—nothing in the world will persuade any of them to ascend its sides beyond a certain height.

A monk—very long ago indeed, for the old traveller Tournefort, who journeyed about these countries in the beginning of the last century, mentions the circumstance as anterior to his time—attempted to climb up in order that his piety might be whetted by the contemplation of a piece of the ark, which he proposed to bring away with him; but, although employing several days in the journey, he was at length obliged to desist; for in the evenings, when falling asleep upon the mountain-side, some supernatural agency carried him back to the point from which he had started in the morning.

To reward him for his pains, however, an angel brought him down a piece of the ark; and informed him at the same time, that since the

landing of Noah, no human being ever had, or ever would be, allowed to visit the place of his disembarkation.

Evidence quite conclusive to the minds of some people would certainly (so differently are men constituted) carry no conviction whatever to those of others; but, it is illustrative of the simplicity of the neighbours,—that, on account of a piece of wood shown at Echmiadzen as a portion of the ark, they all believe that the account of his adventures given by the monk is perfectly true.

If anyone doubts it, they point to the bit of wood; and, whoever cavils at that evidence, would not be persuaded, they think, though one rose from the dead.

"The ark," says Moses, in the fourth verse of the eighth chapter of Genesis, "rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat."

There was also, according to Isaiah, thirty-seventh chapter and thirty-eighth verse; Second Kings, nineteenth chapter and thirty-seventh verse; as well as according to Jeremiah, fifty-first

chapter and twenty-seventh verse—a land or a kingdom of Ararat.

Moses of Khorene—quotations from whose valuable history I have already made—declares that the entire country bore this name after an Armenian king called Arai, who flourished seventeen hundred and fifty years before Christ. He was killed in a war with the Babylonians, on a certain plain in Armenia, called after him Arai-Arat, or the fall of Arai.

Undoubted evidence of its having once been a volcano encourages a belief that it was, indeed, the angel with the flaming sword guarding the entrance to the Garden of Eden; which, accepting the Biblical accounts as substantially correct, must have been situated in the neighbourhood of the sources of both the Tigris and Euphrates, and consequently in the vicinity of Mount Ararat.

Imagine that holy mountain, calculated above all others to fill a pious mind with the most sublime emotions, soaring high up into the clear firmament to a distance of more than three miles and a quarter above the level of the sea!

"The impression," says Perrott, "made by Ararat upon the mind of everyone who has any sensibility for the stupendous works of the Creator, is wonderful and overpowering; and many a traveller of genius and taste has employed both the powers of the pen and of the pencil in attempts to portray this impression. But the consciousness that no description, no representation can reach the sublimity of the object thus attempted to be depicted, must prove to the candid mind that, whether he address the ear or the eye, it is difficult to avoid the poetic in expression and the exaggerated in form, and confine ourselves strictly within the bounds of consistency and truth."

The little Ararat, as it is called,—and which is no more than an arm of the great mountain of the Ark,—is seven thousand feet lower than the master-height, by whose side it looks insignificant and low.

The first person to ascend Mount Ararat was Dr. Perrott; but he only succeeded in reaching the summit after making two unsuccessful attempts.

Since then, however, Captain Peel of the 52nd Light Infantry, Captain Evans of the Inniskilling Dragoons, and some other English officers who accompanied them; afterwards Mr. Cole, an American missionary; Mr. Bryce; and many others, have made the feat (by no means a difficult one, by the way,) nearly as common as the more fashionable ascent of Mont Blanc.

For a long time the stupid Armenians refused to place any credence in the truth of these ascents; but at last, unable to persist any longer in denying a fact known to everybody in the neighbourhood, they invented an ingenious subterfuge for the honour of the monk's story and the miraculous piece of wood. People might go up to the top of the snow, they said, but as the ark was well covered up with great quantities of both it and ice, nobody could get near enough to bring down any more wood; nor could anyone really reach the summit, for it too was equally guarded by the overtopping glacier.

In 1877 the war in Asia Minor commenced

by the advance—from the neighbouring town of Erivan—of a Muscovite army corps, directing its march on Bayazid, a Turkish fortress situated close to the Persian frontier, as well as to that of the Russians; and which, as it lies immediately at the foot of Mount Ararat, might be called the Chamounix of Armenia.

Built on fearful basaltic rocks in a ravine or niche among stupendous cliffs overlooking the great plain, its houses, terraced one above the other, seem to the eye of an approaching traveller quite inaccessible; but it is nevertheless a large town, many of whose private dwellings bear evidence of wealth and comfort.

There is nothing soft or agreeable in the prospect of the circumjacent solitude; but the peculiarity of its position, embellished by an elegant and massive castle frowning from the summit of a big rock commanding the town, gives Bayazid an appearance of considerable picturesqueness and even grandeur.

Still higher up than the modern citadel or palace,—which has been used as a place of exile for disgraced Pashas, Effendis, and Beys,—are

the remains of very extensive ruins, evidently of Saracenic architecture; but the rubbish of falling edifices had so blocked up the archways and other means of ingress, that after several attempts I was obliged to abandon my intention of exploring them.

These very elevated ruins, the "brave castle," with the houses, sometimes crowded close together, and sometimes standing by themselves on large platforms hewn out of the living rock, with Ararat in the background, would form a noble subject for the pencil.

The town previous to the Russian invasion was inhabited by both Turks and Armenians; but great numbers of either nationalities were extremely comfortable, and, in consequence of the trade which they carried on, very wealthy.

The Pasha in command of the castle no sooner saw evidence of the approach of the Russians, than, accompanied by his women, his garrison, and his suite, he made the best of his way across the rocks at the back of the town.

Carrying crosses, grotesque tools of super-

stition, and preceded by a band of virgins wearing very white clothes, and, according to their quaint notions of harmony, singing simple hymns and appropriate and warlike psalms,—all the Armenian inhabitants,—headed by cowled and bearded priests and bishop,—greeted their countryman General Tergugasof, the commander of the Imperial right wing; and hailing him as a conqueror, bid him a hearty welcome.

The Mussulman inhabitants were all very quiet; the administration of their affairs was left in the hands of the Cadi; a Russian Commandant of Bayazid was appointed; and the castle was garrisoned by a small force of Muscovite soldiers.

The Russian army corps, marching by Diadin, Karakalissa, and Moola Solyman, reached Zedikhan. From there they pushed on to the neighbourhood of Daher;* when the Turks, suddenly changing their minds, became, with a view to driving back the invasion, the aggressors. After a terrible battle in which Mahommed Pasha was killed, the Ottomans were either all

* See page 231.

slain, taken prisoners, or else, headed by Pashas, Effendis, and Beys, hunted through the Delibaba Pass in irreparable disorder.

Hearing at the time from men, who professed to have been eye-witnesses of its occupation by the enemy, that Delibaba was in possession of the Muscovites, I changed my intention of visiting it; but if I am to believe the evidence of the priest of that village, supported by the asseverations of its matter-of-fact elders, I could not only have gone without the least danger, but might have remained as long as I liked. No Russians came even within fourteen miles of it on that occasion, and till five or six months afterwards never showed themselves there at all.

The Turks were seized with a complete panic; and one of them, who fell into a ditch near Hassan Kalé, was heard to cry out that he was betrayed. All confidence in their leaders was lost; and it was the general opinion that if the Russians—instead of dawdling and talking about what their friends the Prussians would do under similar circumstances—had pushed on at

once, they might—by taking post at Keupri Keui, and thus threatening Muchtar Pasha's communications with his base—have forced the Ottomans back on Erzerum.

Instead of adopting a course which, however daring, would undoubtedly have inflicted a severe blow on the demoralised Turks, the Muscovites stood very still at the entrance of the Delibaba Pass, and sent a few Cossacks to prowl about the neighbourhood.

Since then I have had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of a very smart officer who commanded a brigade in Tergugasof's army corps.

According to his version of all these things, it appears that the Russians—awed by the unexpected assemblage of Ottoman forces far superior to them in numbers—had made up their minds, before advancing on Erzerum, to wait for the heavy reinforcements which they knew were coming up.

It was for this reason that the few battalions of which Tergugasof's corps was composed, halted after the battle of Daher;

although, judging from what subsequently came to his knowledge, the officer of whom I speak greatly regretted that they had not at once adopted a Napoleonic course, and made a dash on Keupri Keui.

The Oriental mind is easily impressed by daring, and even by an unwarrantable pretence to strength.

There were doubtless great dangers attached to the accomplishment of such a dashing manœuvre; but it is almost certain that it would—if effected without a moment's hesitation—have so increased the terror of the panic-stricken Pashas, Effendis, and Beys, that they would have been as much cowed as they were in former times by the splendid audacity of little Diebitch the Balkan-passer.

Mucktar Pasha is a man whose character, appearance, and qualities are best expressed by the words, "A regular Turk." Nature has endowed him with such a strong nervous system, that no dangers, and no trials, are capable of troubling an equanimity, cooled more than heated, by the approach of perils, which would

be appalling to men less admirably constituted.

Had he been always supported by brave and loyal officers gifted with temperaments as heroic as his own, many of the catastrophes by which the Turkish army was disgraced would never have happened.

No sooner had he heard of the complete rout of his right wing at Daher, than, determined to repair such a dangerous disorder, he, accompanied by only two orderlies, proceeded there in person and assumed command.

Being a man of great reticence, and having learned from experience that a secret is no longer so, if anybody else knows it, he confided his intentions to no one; and when an English officer, meeting him in Khorassan, on the way to his right wing at Esshek-Kilias, a large village not far from Delibaba, asked him what was the news, and where he was going to, he only answered, in his bad French: "Il n'y a pas de nouvelles. Allez vous coucher, et quand vous vous levez le matin demandez des nouvelles aux passants."

This officer, thinking nothing of what he had heard, went to sleep; but early in the morning passers-by told him that the Mooshere had gone away during the night, and in a great hurry, towards Delibaba.

The appearance of Mucktar inspired confidence among the disorganised Turks.

Rallying his shattered forces, greatly superior in numbers to the small army corps under Tergugasof, he—according to the accounts given to me by the Russian officer above alluded to—fell upon the Imperial general as he was in the act of moving back towards Bayazid.

Tergugasof, turning fiercely to bay, cautioned stout Mucktar not to be in too great a hurry, and effected his retreat so manfully that the rear-guard, with which he always remained, drew off very slowly and in solid order.*

While all these events were taking place, the garrison which had been left in Bayazid prepared for the enjoyment of what they

* Arriving only in time to see Tergugasof's rear-guard drawing off, I am inclined—judging from the formation of both sides on that occasion—to think that this account of the skirmish is the correct one.

considered very easy and comfortable quarters.

The perfect sense of security and repose by which they were animated, induced a staff-officer's wife to leave her home at Erivan.

She drove across to Bayazid from the latter town; and, if in doing so pleased herself—she at the same time afforded pleasure to the officers, by embellishing with the company of at least one lady—a society composed exclusively of men.

The small garrison lived in the palace or citadel, overlooking to a great distance the plains below, and built on the top of a rock in the middle of the town; but as Bayazid lies more than twenty miles off the direct road leading back into Erivan, the Russian force—marching from Daher—could not be seen by their countrymen in the last-mentioned place.

As everybody who knows anything about Orientals is well aware of the surprising influence exercised in their minds by renown or by an appearance of power, it can be easily imagined that the nomadic Koords watched with absorb-

ing interest and attention everything that was going on; and that the earliest intelligence was rapidly conveyed to the most distant camps or hordes.

Like the Highlanders of old, these Koords are divided into tribes or clans; which, although making war upon one another, or acting according to the will or caprices of their despotic chiefs, nevertheless acknowledge as a general rule the sovereignty of either Persia or Turkey.

Being very bigoted, and longing to take part in a holy war in which there was every chance of profit and success—they, although in the first instance, retreating as far as possible from the scene of danger, no sooner believed that Tergugasof was running away from Mucktar as hard as he could, than the chief of the Jelaleen clan, hoisting his standard, appeared upon the scene.

Not only his own powerful tribe, but every Koord wishing to see life according to his ideas of it, flocked round his banner. His following swelled like that of Prince Charles Edward after the battle of Falkirk;

and in the metaphoric exaggeration of Eastern language, they said that if the sky had fallen down, it would have been supported on a mass of dancing spears as thick as the trees of the forest.

Notwithstanding their formidable appearance, the ideas of density and cohesion produced in the mind by the sight of the thick volume of heavily ornamented spears, the dust which they raised, and the noise and clamour, always a source of fear to poltroons, with which their disorderly advance was heralded, this multitude was in reality a most arrant and contemptible rabble, easily dispersable by a few regular soldiers.

Tergugasof—instead of estimating them at their real value, and dealing with them as we have dealt over and over again with the Mahrattas and Pindarees—manœuvred as if he was in the presence of twenty or thirty thousand disciplined soldiers.

Becoming greatly alarmed, and without troubling himself in the least about the garrison of Bayazid, left to the tender mercies of these

gentry, he retired hastily from whence he came, and took up a defensive position—which was never troubled—in front of Erivan.

The Russians in the Castle of Bayazid prepared to defend themselves; but, after a short siege, surrendered on the promises of the Turks that they should be treated according to the generous customs of civilised warfare.

In compliance with this convention, they opened the gates and prepared to evacuate the citadel. A truculent and overbearing rabble of Turks and Koords, flushed with success, and deeming themselves invincible, crowded the space outside that stronghold.

Then, perceiving that the first prisoners of war who had come out and laid down their arms were Mussulmans, among whom were some Koordish horsemen disciplined in the Imperial service, they — according to the account given to me by a Russian officer who was there—fell upon them like wild beasts and massacred them without mercy.

The Russian infantry at once shut the gates, and opening a heavy fire on the traitors, soon

cleared the space where they had crowded together.

All these things being reported to Jelaleen, Shake or head of the tribe of that name, he called upon his ragamuffins to fall on in the name of God.

The Russians in the citadel looked down upon the wealthy, prosperous, and populous town of Bayazid, and in it took place deeds of unparalleled ferocity, obscenity, and wantonness. The terrified Armenians, shutting themselves up in their houses, endeavoured to hide. The wild Koords, crowding by thousands the streets, and breaking open the doors, dragged both men and women into the public places.

In order that the Muscovites above might have a better view, they carried the poor Armenians on to the housetops, where, even in those elevated positions, they encouraged each other in crimes and horrors equally unmentionable and inconceivable.

In Bayazid were many wealthy families of Armenians whose daughters had been tenderly brought up, but they were murdered, violated,

or carried off; and in most cases their fate to this day remains a mystery to those among their forlorn relatives who escaped.

Every wretched Armenian, whether old or young, whether poor or rich, whether a man of consequence or an artisan, who fell into the hands of these wretches, was massacred without mercy.

They dragged them as butchers drag animals to the shambles, and hacked them to pieces in presence of their terrified wives and children, reserved even for a worse fate.

The house-tops, the streets, as well as the rooms inside the houses, were strewn with corpses; and the lanes and gutters ran down with blood. Infants of the most tender age were not spared; and in many cases poor little children, who had lost their parents, wandered about quite alone, and, convulsed with continual weeping, lay down and died.

This hateful and deadly work went on as long as there were men to slay or women to abuse.

Even after the extermination of their victims,

the rage of the Koords and of the Turks (for many Turkish inhabitants of Bayazid out-devilled even the Koords) against their inoffensive and defenceless victims was not appeased.

With revolting jests, gibes, and horse laughter, these abominable miscreants, after cutting off noses and other mutilations, placed the naked corpses of men and women in such indelicate positions, as to cause the merriment and applause of sanguinary bystanders or plunderers wandering about the place.

Many Mussulman inhabitants of Bayazid —fearing that, on the first occupation of the town by the Russians, their houses would be plundered—entrusted the keeping of jewellery, treasures, and other valuable effects, to the care of Armenian neighbours.

This confidence was not betrayed; and when the fear of danger had passed away, the property was returned.

In hopes of a reward for such kindness, terror-stricken Armenians sought refuge, when the massacre began, in the houses of Mussulman acquaintances living close by.

With the exception, however, of one or two brave and honest Turks, who in the name of humanity protected a few of these forlorn wretches—they were refused admittance, and brutally driven from the doors.

Save in the houses of Turks reported to be harbouring Armenians, the privacy of Mussulman habitations was not invaded; but one fine old Mahommedan—in a noble endeavour to defend the wretches who had sought his protection—was shot dead.

A very rich and well-known Turk admitted several Armenian families inside his gate; but after taking charge of and locking up whatever jewels or treasures they brought with them, he, with the exception of a few young and very good-looking girls, whom he engaged as servant-maids, drove them with violence among the Koords outside.

"With yells of delight," said a man, the only person who escaped out of the party, "with yells of delight the Koords fell upon this fresh batch, and in a short time they were driven off like captured animals, or else slain."

Parents were unaware of the fate of their children, and children of that of their parents; wives remained in ignorance whether they were widows or not; and abandoned orphans were sometimes taken charge of by mothers who had lost their own offspring.

Let anyone imagine the fate of an Armenian girl, living till these fearful times in the bosom of untroubled family existence, cheered by the sympathies of affection and the aspirations of love—let him imagine her degraded and hopeless life when feeling that she is lost for ever in a camp of Koords. Her family mourn for her as though she were dead; and truly indeed would it be better for such a one that she had never been born.

While these still unpunished, though never-to-be-forgotten, crimes were being enacted all over the doomed town of Bayazid, the little Russian garrison in the citadel *had an excellent and uninterrupted view of everything that was going on.*

Each officer has a fearful tale to tell of what he himself saw quite plainly in the streets and

on the housetops; but the determination of the garrison to die like men rather than fall alive into the hands of such ruthless and barbarous foes was strengthened by the scenes they witnessed.

It showed what was in store for them if they laid down their arms; and they were naturally animated with the courage of despair. The Russian flag floated proudly from the citadel; flashes of musketry from the loopholed walls kept its fiendish assailants at bay; and so great was the resolution of the garrison, that sick and wounded men fired from their beds placed near barricaded windows and embrasures.

Suffering from hunger and thirst, greatly reduced in numbers, and after waiting for days and days in the vain hope of perceiving the dust of a relieving force coming to the rescue, while they were galled eternally by the raking fire of a Turkish battery placed in position on a commanding height at the back, the little band of heroes thought of surrender.

The widow of the Russian staff officer, for

her husband had been killed, reproached whoever thought of such an alternative as a coward; and, threatening to fling herself from the battlements rather than trust to the mercy or forbearance of the Turks—inspired all those who listened to her words with so much valour and enthusiasm, that every man, with chivalrous generosity, swore that while a Russian lived the citadel should be defended.

Nothing animates so much the courage of true soldiers as the sympathy and presence of a woman; and the brave lady, becoming the life and soul of the garrison, filled them with a determination to hold out to the last extremity.

The summons of Ismael Pasha, accompanied by a promise of generous treatment, was repelled with scorn; and, notwithstanding a shower of missiles to which they were constantly exposed, the Muscovites displayed a constancy and unswerving devotion equally noble and affecting.

The ruined condition of the citadel showed

how desperate had been the defence; and when I visited the building it was everywhere marked or disfigured from the storm of bullets which had been constantly dashing in.

CHAPTER IX.

KOORDS AND ARMENIANS.

The Valley ravaged.—Slaughter of Armenians.—They fly for Protection into Russian or Persian Territory.—Exaggeration impossible.—Relief of the Garrison in the Citadel.—Resembled Relief of Lucknow.—Not a living Soul in Bayazid.—Its disgusting Aspect.—Plains of Alishkird equally deserted.—Zedikhan.—Destitution.—Statements of Armenians.—Retreat of the Russian Rearguard.—Conduct of the Turks.—Absurd Statements.—Koord Ismael Hakki Pasha.—Abeioola and Jellaleen, Koordish Chiefs.—Ismael Pasha hated by the Koords.—His Fear of their Disaffection.—His Piety.—His Patriarchal Justice in Camp.—Wounded Men.—Difficulty of getting Information.—Peasants' Logic.

CHAPTER IX.

KOORDS AND ARMENIANS.

Not satisfied with the sack of the doomed town, the Koords, joined by every plunderer, bad character, and marauder among the neighbours, roved for a distance of about fifty miles through the splendid pastures of Alishkird.

Their brutality and violence in the rich and prosperous villages, covering in every direction that extensive district, quite equalled the display which they had made of those qualities in Bayazid.

Everywhere the Christians of Armenia were slaughtered or hunted down; families were dispersed; and wretched girls violated, carried

off, or massacred, according to the caprices of the moment.

The churches were ransacked, plundered, or defiled; and fierce bigotry, brutal lust, and avarice ran riot in Alishkird.

The inhabitants of a few villages—hearing about what was taking place—abandoned their homes, and loaded with little children and such portable property as they could carry on their backs, took refuge in Russian territory. Many of them flocked into Erivan or to its neighbourhood; while others sought and obtained the sympathy and assistance of their countrymen in Persia. Several families, warned by a prophetic instinct of what was about to happen, followed in considerable numbers the retreating Muscovites.

Starving with hunger, and tortured from continual exposure, little batches of Armenian men, women, and children, completely dazed and terror-stricken, hid themselves here and there among the lonely rocks; but, even then they did not always succeed in escaping; for, whenever discovered, they were set upon and slain.

To exaggerate these events would be altogether impossible; but let any man of spirit place himself in the position of those Armenians who still live, and live happily, under the protection of the Imperial Government, but who have witnessed or even heard of these scenes, and let him ask himself if he would not burn for revenge on the scourges and tyrants of his country people.

One morning the forlorn band of heroes in the citadel perceived an unusual commotion among the Mahommedan inhabitants of Bayazid; and the few people who remained in that town took their departure in such extreme haste that the hopes of the beleaguered garrison revived.

The cause of this exodus soon became apparent; for the dust in the plains at the foot of Mount Ararat rose in great clouds from the march of Russian cavalry, artillery, and infantry, at length coming to the relief of their desponding comrades.

The Koords, knowing what they deserved, and made cowards by guilty consciences, did not offer even a semblance of resistance; while the

covering force of Turks retired hastily towards Karakalissa.

With loud shouts, followed by heartfelt and warm embraces, the delighted little garrison rushed out to meet the relieving corps, which, under Tergugasof, had come to the rescue.

Soldiers and officers sought for friends from whom they had so long been separated; and although the death of many an old and favourite comrade was lamented, all men were filled with such delight and joy, that a Russian officer who was present compared it (for my clearer comprehension) to the relief of Lucknow in former days.

From Armenians, from Turks, from Persians, but above all from the lips of a general of the relieving force, I learned the horrors of that frightful episode in the Minor Asiatic war.

Festering corpses formed—in every street and deserted house — pictorial histories of Armenian last agonies and shame.

Fetid odours rising from so many dead bodies made the town a pest-house. Every sense and every sentiment was outraged in the place, and

when the Russians moved back on Erivan, Ararat looked down on Bayazid, as solitary, lonely, and deserted as itself.

The Armenian villages were silent and empty; the blue smoke no longer curled upwards from the little chimneys; the half-cut crops lay uncared-for on the ground; but no signs of either life or movement enlivened the deserted plains of Alishkird.

At length, however, the Turks re-occupied the citadel; the dead bodies were buried or burnt; but afterwards Koords and other marauders wandering about the town, so completely gutted it of every movable article worth taking away, that when I explored the abandoned houses, Bayazid might be described as a "heap of blood-stained ruins."

Several weeks after these lamentable events, I rode down from a hamlet called Koord Ali into the neighbouring village of Zedikhan, situated on the Euphrates, or, as it is called by the Turks, the Mourad Su. Some Turkish officers and soldiers lolled about the place, and, according to the custom of the country, I took up my

quarters for the night in a large room, which served as a shelter to my horses, as well as to some cows and buffaloes who lived there always.

The Armenians to whom the house belonged seemed to be possessed of no property whatever; but their suspicious and surly manners insinuated that I was an unwelcome guest. I was, however, quite independent of anyone's hospitality; for—hearing before I set out, of the complete abandonment or total destitution of the villages where I should be obliged to pass the nights—I had stored my saddle-bags with portable provisions, sufficient to last for several days.

When questioned about the recent occurrences in Alishkird, my Armenian hosts answered evasively, and led me to believe—as far as I could understand what they meant—that their countrymen had left their homes because they were foolish people.

So far, no information was to be drawn out of them; but my faithful Armenian follower or henchman—who during the nine or ten months

that I remained in Armenia served me, and on some rather trying occasions, with unflagging fidelity, alacrity, and courage—regarded me steadily in the face, closed one eye, and then, after a long pause opening it again, looked sideways, and without moving his head, at my two Turkish orderlies, sitting on a stone at no great distance off.

In the course of the evening, and when the Zaptiehs had gone out, the Armenians, although reticent and suspicious, became much more communicative.

As time wore on, and when perfectly assured that there was no danger in pouring out their troubles, their loquacity was surprising.

Several poor men came to pay me a visit; and, while one of them watched at the door to make sure that there were no eaves-droppers, they complained bitterly and in pathetic accents of their desolate and forlorn condition.

My good Armenian Hadjee Garabet, whom I shall always think of with feelings of kindliness, had gained the confidence of his countrymen; had told them that I might be safely

trusted; and that there was no fear of my denouncing them as grumblers to any Pasha, Effendi, or Bey.

The Russians, they said, occupied the village of Zedikhan on their advance towards Delibaba, at the other side of the mountains. Among these Muscovite soldiers were many Armenians; and delighted at the arrival of men whom they hailed as deliverers, every demonstration of friendship and goodwill greeted their approach.

Provisions were sold to them; and, true to their Armenian principles of cheating, they smiled pleasantly when they added complacently—"at exorbitant prices."

Forgetting for the moment their other troubles, they enumerated with delight the value received in solid silver for each animal or fowl; and imagination carried them back to the short Russian occupation as to a golden age.

"We insulted no Turks, we committed no violence," they said; and of the absolute truth of this statement there cannot, I believe—judging from the uncontradicted testimony which

I received from every source—be the least doubt.

"The Turks advanced," they continued, "and on their approach the Dragoons, long living in and around the village on very friendly and intimate terms with its inhabitants, wished us good-bye, encouraged us to be of good cheer, and assuring us that they would come back again very soon, retired slowly along the plain."

They, with a body of foot-soldiers, composed the rear-guard; and their steady retreat was respected by the advancing Ottomans, who before long took possession of the village.

Nothing could be more orderly than the conduct of the Turkish infantry; and nowhere have I heard them accused of violence towards, or ill-usage of, Armenian Christians; but they never attempted to repress the disorders of Koords, Bashi Bazooks, Circassians, nor any of the other plunderers and ruffians who followed in their wake.

The village then was no sooner abandoned by the retreating Russians and the advancing Turks, than a large body of nomadic Koords—

accompanied by settlers of the same nation from villages in the great plains of Alishkird—swarmed into Zedikhan, where they committed every kind of excess and violence.

Although the wife of my host denied that either herself or any women at that moment living in the village had been ill-used, I have but little doubt that her statement was untrue; for the natural modesty of nearly every female prevents her exposing to strangers her own shame or that of her friends.

That women had been violated and abused they all admitted; and one old and decayed man—with an appearance of grief and sorrow which, if depicted on the stage, I should have pronounced exaggerated and absurd—declared, with sobs and pathetic lamentations, that he had two daughters who were the joy of his heart.

The universal language of expression and gesticulation lent emphasis to every word that he spoke. "Were they not beautiful and tall and fat?" he asked the neighbours; and they all told me that they were beautiful and tall

and fat. The old man hid his face in his hands.

Raising up his head, and fixing his eyes upon me, he cried: "When I saw them last they were being dragged away by the Koords;" and as he said these words, he pressed his forefinger and thumb upon each eyelid.

"Everything we had was taken away from us," continued the villagers; "and Mussulmans in the neighbourhood are in possession of many articles which, although our lawful property, they purchased from the Koords.

"God knows where our children are! God knows what is to become of us!" they said, and they beat their breasts and looked towards me for a sympathy which it was impossible not to feel.

So far, there can be no doubt that what they said was all perfectly true; but when the broken-down and much-to-be-pitied old man, raising his head, again took up his parable, it is equally certain that, with the natural anxiety of an injured person to lay the blame of his misfortunes on somebody within reach of rebuke or

punishment, he made many statements altogether ridiculous and absurd.

"Koord Ismael Hakki Pasha," he cried, "is a Koord himself, and the greatest fanatic in the world. It was he who ordered the massacres and outrages in Alishkird. He even recompensed those who had killed and slaughtered most Armenians. In his camp near this village he offered a reward for every Christian's head laid at his feet, and they were brought to him by thousands."

As all these statements equal in absurdity and malevolence, accounts which I have read about Ismael Pasha in English newspapers, it may not be out of place to say who he is, and what part he took in all these transactions.

To begin with, then, at the time of the massacres of Alishkird he was at a place a hundred miles off, and had no more to do with them than I had.

Ismael Pasha is a Koord by birth; and to this day his brother practises—according to the custom of the family—the profitable trade of footpad or highwayman. To speak of Ismael,

however, as a *Koordish* chief, is as absurd as it would have been to give the title of *Highland* chief to some common Highlander, who—supposing such a thing possible now, as it was over a hundred years ago—having enlisted in the English army and risen to the rank of general, commanded a corps supported by Highland clans.

Abeioola and Shake Jelaleen were Koordish chiefs by hereditary rights, of which they were as proud as the Black Douglas was of his; but Ismael was only a common fellow, who, having risen in the Ottoman service, and lived among Turks all his life, had very little sympathy with countrymen who looked upon him, except for his rank of Pasha, as of no greater worth than a mere spearsman.

At the siege of Kars, Ismael, then colonel of a regiment, served under General Williams; but in course of time rising to be a Pasha, he was appointed Governor or Vali of Koordistan, as the Turks call that part of the ancient kingdom of Armenia of which they are possessed.

From here, not very long ago, he conducted

several military expeditions against the Koords; and so rigorous and brutal was his treatment of Koordish prisoners falling into his hands, that his very name inspired terror and hatred throughout the whole country.

He was called, as a general rule, Koord Pasha; but although men also knew him by the name of old Ismael the Wolf, I believe that designation was given to him because Koord and Wolf in Turkish are almost similar words.

He was a person of immense size, of very unwieldy deportment, and upwards of seventy years of age. Of all Turkish dignitaries with whom I have been acquainted, he most resembled the traditional Pasha, or the picture of the Indian Nawab on the celebrated pickle bottles. There was something terrible in his look and piercing eye. Whenever he spoke, which he did rarely and at long intervals, men hearkened to his words; but he was extremely gracious, and very hospitable and obliging to all Europeans with whom he came in contact.

He was selected for the command of the Turkish right wing, not because he was a cele-

brated strategist, but because he carried great personal authority in himself, and because he was a brave and obedient soldier, who could ever be depended on for carrying out the orders of his superiors.

No sooner had he arrived at Bayazid, than, in a severe order of the day, he rebuked the Koords for the excesses of which they had been guilty; described such atrocities as disgraceful to the character of every true Mussulman; and declared that the next person convicted of similar crimes should be immediately hung.

Considering that the movements of Ismael's corps were attended by enormous hordes of Koords following the standard of Abeioola, and that those spearmen formed his only cavalry, the relations of the Pasha with that proud and insubordinate commander were necessarily of a very delicate nature. Had he dared to punish any of the men belonging to those feudal mobs, all the tribe would have left his camp in a mass; and, so doubtful is their allegiance when they are vexed, they might even have

begun plundering the convoys and thus cut off his communication with Erzerum.

He, therefore, while endeavouring to keep them under restraint, did all he could, and very sensibly too, to propitiate such bloodthirsty and lawless villains.

Every duty required of him he performed with success; and his retreat through the Delibaba Pass on Keupri Keui, was a perfect marvel of Turkish good-luck and Russian stupidity.

He was always reading the Koran, or saying his prayers; and it was to those religious exercises that he attributed his excellent health and invariable good fortune. He was a very strict disciplinarian, and sitting outside in a truly patriarchal attitude, frequently caused delinquents, *whether they were officers or not*, to be soundly cudgelled in front of his tent.

He left everything in the hands of the all-seeing Providence; and although his army corps consisted of upwards of thirty thousand men, there was not a single doctor, apothecary, or dresser of any kind within forty miles!

People, however badly mutilated or wounded,—if there remained the least spark of vitality in their bodies,—were sprawling like shot animals over the backs of mules, sent away on a two or three days' journey to Bayazid; and during a kind of ridiculous battle at which I was present, and where he lost about three hundred men, a remark that stretchers would be a more convenient mode of transport for such acute suffering, caused a Pasha to observe that the Ottoman Turks were very fond of riding!

From the reticence of the Armenians of Zedikhan, in the first instance, followed by their subsequent garrulous and absurd statements, to which they were all ready to swear in the most solemn forms, it can easily be understood how extremely difficult it is to obtain correct information from Christians.

Accepting their first accounts as correct, the most honest and fact-investigating philosopher might have continued his journey under the impression; *that*, no massacres or atrocities had taken place in Alashkird; *that*, even if the tranquillity of the district had been disturbed, the

accounts spread abroad concerning such disorders had been greatly exaggerated; and *that*, the abandonment of their homes by so many people had been the result of a foolish panic.

Had it not been for the confidence with which his terrified countrymen regarded my faithful follower Hadjee Garabet, it is quite certain that, in dread of the Turks, the unhappy people would not have told me anything.

Their suspicions being dispelled, they longed to excite pity by giving free vent to their imaginations; and if the stories told under such excitement were believed, the outrages to which they had been subjected were promoted and encouraged by the highest representatives of the Turkish Government.

Before accepting either extreme as true, it is necessary to sift the evidence; but to do so in Turkey is, in consequence of the reasons which I have given, a matter of both trouble and disappointment. Nearly all the people are great liars, and will not hesitate to confuse their interlocutors by denying circumstances well known to have occurred, or else by persist-

ing in the most absurd and impossible statements.

The simple people of Zedikhan were all persuaded that Koord Ismael Hakki Pasha had bought Christians' heads as if they were eggs, and at so much a dozen; and, although the fact, repeatedly explained to them by good Hadjee Garabet, of the said commander being a hundred miles off on the occasion of the disorders in their neighbourhood, was not disputed, it was, by means of a reasoning process peculiar to peasants, regarded as a circumstance altogether irrelevant to their wild charges against him.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

Extensive Plains.—Their complete Devastation.—Harrowing Reflections. — A Koordish Village. — Koords and Koords.—The Bag and Baggage Policy.—Abandoned Armenian Villages. — Bridge over the Euphrates. — Rapidity of the Stream.—The Cathedral of Utchkalissa or Surg Ohannes.—Its Sanctity.—Grotesque Pictures.—Desecration of the Church.—Tenacity with which the Armenians have clung to their Religion.—Aderbeijan, or the Country of the Fire-Worshippers. — A Persian's Opinion of the Irish.—Persian Furniture.—Persians and Armenians. — Forlorn Condition of the Armenians.—Savage Scenery.—A dazed Armenian.—Another Armenian.—Affecting Condition of the Survivors.—The Confessions made to me by the Women.—Conclusion.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

The plains of Alishkird commence at Zedikhan. They are so flat and monotonous that, after riding away from that village during a space of ten hours, the two or three trees with which it is ornamented can still be seen, looking in the distance like the dark sails of a ship between the far horizon and the sea.

These plains, covered with prosperous villages, and watered by numerous streams rippling on their courses towards the Euphrates through splendid pastures, extend in a length of about forty miles or more to the neighbourhood of Bayazid.

The snowy peak of Ararat is ever in sight, and in the background they are closed in all

round by brown hills, which, although looking insignificant, as the traveller quite forgets the elevation at which he rides along, are nevertheless from eight to ten thousand feet above the sea-level.

In the neighbourhood of Zedikhan, there were a few villages still inhabited by Armenians, who, notwithstanding their attempts to leave the country, had been prevented from doing so by both Turks and Koords; for these legislators, after plundering them of whatever they had, and carrying off a few handsome girls, drove them back again.

The last-mentioned depredations were not, they said, near so murderous as those which had devastated other parts of the plain.

After passing a large place named Topra Kalé, situated at the foot of the mountains on the left-hand side, we rode all day long past towns and villages entirely deserted.*

The heavy crops by which they were surrounded stood uncared-for and abandoned; the rustic mill-wheels were not turning round;

* See p. 175, vol. ii.

the doors of the houses swung upon their hinges; the little churches had often been used as stables by passing travellers; and, except a few marvellously emaciated and tottering cats, we could perceive no signs of life or animation.

The industrious and harmless inhabitants had been scattered; and so fearful and complete had been the dispersion, that people of the same family did not know if their nearest relatives were still alive.

After leaving Karakalissa, once a comfortable town ornamented with many edifices of a snug and homely appearance, but at this time only occupied by some Turkish infantry soldiers, we continued a journey, every mile of which could not fail to fill the minds of the most frivolous travellers with subjects of harrowing reflection.

At night-fall we arrived at a Koordish village, the name of which I quite forget. It was situated on the left bank of the Euphrates; and in order to get to it, we were forced to ride up to our horses' chests across the broad and rapid stream.

Here we were treated with extreme respect and excessive attention; but it was no sooner discovered that I was the master of the ride, than the Head-man, a distinguished-looking old rascal in flowing green robes, kissed the hem of my overcoat and the side of my boot, and then led my horse along by its bridle.

These Koords declaring that they were very poor people, expressed deep regret at being unable to provide either ourselves or our animals with anything to eat.

On this announcement, my Turks began belabouring every Koord within reach, and before long all that we required was produced.

When questioned concerning the recent occurrences in the neighbourhood, they murmured that, being greatly frightened at what they heard, none of them had dared to leave the village. There were Koords and Koords in the world, they said; and, although some of them were very bad, they, at least, enjoyed the happy consciousness of complete and perfect innocence.

We afterwards heard that these wretches having joined their nomadic countrymen, were ever in the van of the slaughter; and that—as many of them were well known to be professional thieves and incubuses on the industry and peace of the district, the Armenians, returning to their native places with the protection of the conquering Russians under Tergugasof, were prepared to swear many odious crimes, felonies, and other misdemeanours against them.

In consequence of this, the rear-guard of Ismael's force had hardly drawn off in its subsequent retreat, in October, 1877, than these miscreants, adopting the celebrated bag and baggage policy of Mr. Gladstone, totally abandoned their village, and leaving behind them much Armenian stolen property, followed their wandering friends into those almost inaccessible parts of the mountains which overlook the great Lake of Van, and whose highest peak, the Saiban Dagh, is visible from the plains of Alashkird.

Two hours before daybreak we left this village, which was so odiously dirty that

I slept under the canopy of the star-lit sky.

Over an extent of more than forty miles, abandoned Armenian towns and hamlets disfigured the interminable and melancholy landscapes.

Our road lay along the right bank of the Euphrates, which we crossed near the famous cathedral, village, and monastery of Utchkalissa, by means of an ancient and picturesque stone bridge, so violently curved that I held my horse's mane as he walked up one of its perpendicular sides. It was full of holes; in a most dilapidated condition; without any battlements or side protections whatever; and so very narrow as to resemble a rugged footpath.

Halting close by, I plunged head first into the Euphrates; but its stream here was so rapid, that while floating luxuriantly on my back, and forgetting the pace at which I was being borne along the bank where my party rested, was in an incredibly short space of time, more than half a mile off.

The celebrated cathedral and monastery of Utchkalissa present, at first sight, more the appearance of a fort or stronghold than of religious shrines. They are surrounded by a lofty and very massive wall.

Containing (as the Armenians believe it does) the bones of John the Baptist (which, by the way, are also said to be in the cathedral of San Lorenzo, at Genoa), the lonely cathedral is one of the most venerated and frequented places of Christian pilgrimage in the whole of Asia.

It is almost as holy as Echmiadzin itself; but it is probable that the chance of meeting Koords on the journey, by increasing the perils, has added additional merit to the expedition.

According to tradition, it is said to have been founded by St. Narses, a grandson of St. Gregory, who—on account of his having first preached Christianity to the benighted heathen of ancient Armenia—was called the Illuminator.

The date of its foundation is supposed to go

back to the third century of the Christian era. Surg Ohannes, or St. John, is the name by which it is known to the Armenians.

The designation of Utchkalissa, meaning in Turkish the three churches, is derived from three Christian temples, destroyed in former times by Mussulman fanaticism; but of which no vestiges remain at the present day.

Except the rippling of the Euphrates, not a sound broke the perfect stillness of the place.

Halting in the shade of its massive walls, we contemplated only desolation and ruin.

The monks and the bishop had escaped by accompanying the retreat of their countryman, General Tergugasof; and it was said that they saved the convent library, a collection of about one hundred very old Armenian books, which have, I believe, never been examined.

The church, dark, lofty, and impressive, consists of a nave resting on sixteen columns. On each side are the chapels of St. John and of St. Stephen; and the Armenians believe that

they contain respectively the bones of those holy people.

The walls are decorated, or disfigured, with huge pictures of saints, evidently of very ancient date; and among the most conspicuous are the extremely ill-proportioned representations of our Saviour resting on the Virgin's lap; St. George overcoming his dragon; together with St. Demetrius mounted on an animal, certainly intended for a horse, but with a head no bigger than its rider's hand.

This sacred place had been defiled and insulted in every way that it is possible to conceive; and my faithful follower Hadjee Garabet was horror-stricken as he pointed out to me that the high altar had been purposely used for the vilest and most disgustiug purposes.

The offal of cattle and the remains of fire showed that the nave as well as the chapels of the saints had served as resting-places for both men and beasts; but the marks of bullets, blows, and obscene tracings made by means of charcoal from smouldering sticks, on the most

sanctified, although certainly the very grotesque, objects of Armenian worship, animated the deadly hatred, and drew forth the execrations of crowds of Christian soldiers who afterwards visited Utchkalissa as conquerors.

By means of crowbars or other powerful and ponderous implements, the heavy slabs covering the supposed graves of the forerunner of our Lord, and other saints, had been torn from their places; and the cathedral was rummaged, ransacked, defaced, and defiled in whatever direction we wandered.

Our footsteps echoed again and again as we strolled about these deserted places; but, "No matter," said poor Hadjee, "God is just, and God will punish sacrilege."

Before first visiting these countries I confess to having had a very vague idea of who the Armenians were, or where Armenia was; but since then I know enough to feel a deep interest and a keen sympathy for that long-suffering, desolate, and oppressed nation.

As I rode along, I meditated on the tenacity with which this people have, notwithstanding

the fiercest persecution, clung to the religion of Christ; but the sack and defilement of Utchkalissa reminded me of the following lines, composed by Narses on the destruction of Edessa by the Turks, and quoted by the Armenian Chamchian in the history of his country:

> "Close by the altar in the sacred fane,
> Where daily God's own paschal lamb is slain,
> Hadji the impious made vile harlots sing,
> And drunken broils throughout the temple ring."

After leaving Utchkalissa, not an Armenian was to be seen. The country had been completely evacuated, and its Christian inhabitants had all sought refuge either in Russia or Persia.

Avoiding the filthy Koordish houses of Diadin, I slept in the open air; but after my men and horses had rested, I crossed over into that part of ancient Armenia called Aderbeijan, or the country of the fire-worshippers; where I obtained a considerable part of the information about the lamentable events in Alishkird which I have now written.

The mountains separating the territories of

the Sultan from those of the Shah are high, bare, and barren; but the descent into the valley of Ovanjuk presents a pleasing and agreeable prospect to the eye of the tired traveller.

The town of Ovanjuk is situated near the banks of a stream; the houses are surrounded by gardens and trees; and the tall hats and extremely gracious manners of the polite and deceitful Persians were an exhilarating novelty after the sadness and monotony of Alishkird.

Abbas Kool, in the absence of his father at Teheran, entertained us very hospitably; and a Persian notable, who informed me that tee-totallers were regarded in the light of animals in Persia, got very drunk with my Irish whisky.

When I informed him that that incomparable beverage was the native food of my kinsmen and of my beloved countrymen, he swore that he would be my friend for ever; and in a little time the generous effects produced by the consumption of a single bottle, moved him to declare that a race entirely nourished

on that marvellous spirit must certainly be benevolent and brave.

The Persians, like the Mahommedans of India, are much more prejudiced than the Turks; for although they have no objection whatever to drinking out of the same bottle, they will not eat at the same table with a Christian. Abbas Kool entertained me with a sumptuous repast of thirteen courses, not counting his excellent display of almost every kind of delicious fruit; but he himself ate from a separate tray, placed, according to the inconvenient custom of the country, on the carpet, where the people squat in uncomfortable attitudes, with their legs folded underneath their bodies.

Except thick and luxurious carpets and mattresses or pillows, the Persian apartments are perfectly devoid of either ornament or furniture; so that instead of from a table, people eat, and even drink Irish whisky in incredible quantities, from a level with the ground.

The Turks use little tables about six inches high, which certainly to our habits are much more convenient.

So exclusive are the Persians, that they will not even allow a Christian to enter a hummum, or public bath, which is a luxury permitted equally to all men by the tolerance of the Ottomans.

The Persian Government is certainly the most cruel and tyrannical that was ever invented; but notwithstanding all its objectionableness, the Armenians far prefer it to that of the Turks.

The Armenians seeking protection in Ovanjuk were hospitably and sympathetically received by Abbas Kool, who generously ministered to their wants; comforted them with kind words; and distributed them among their countrymen, not only in the town itself, in which great numbers of them were quartered at the time of my visit, but also throughout the villages of the adjacent plain.

Here they again breathed freely, and felt that they were safe. This information was not given to me by Abbas Kool, but by Hadjee, who obtained it from the mouths of his unfortunate countrymen.

In droves; in twos or threes; and sometimes a half-idiotic Armenian quite alone, but who for several days had been hiding and wandering in the mountains—these forlorn outcasts dragged themselves into Ovanjuk; but, with touching manliness, many of the poor wretches who had lost their own children, rescued those of others; and brought them with care and trouble into Persian or Russian territory.

The same sickening story was corroborated by many people; and from this it appeared that the Turks were often as demoniacal as the Koords; but, wherever I went, I never heard a single accusation against an Ottoman regular soldier.

Notwithstanding pressing invitations to stay for ever with Abbas Kool Sahib, and my drunken Persian friend, who cursed the cruel destiny which had not made him a whisky-drinking Irishman, I crossed over the mountains on my way to Bayazid.

The scenery, on coming down into the town from among the heights behind it, is savagely

picturesque. Pinnacles of wild rocks stand out on every side; and a sudden view of the stately citadel insinuates at first sight the idea that it must be an enchanted place entirely inapproachable.

Winding along the edge of a vast precipice, and running through a narrow little chasm darkened by overhanging cliffs, closely shutting it in on either side, the rugged track suddenly comes out on a flat space from which there is a full view of Bayazid, scattered among the gullies and clinging to the base of the palace and the rock. Far down below are the plains of 'Alishkird.

At the time of my visit, the town of Bayazid was entirely deserted; and I slept on a bare floor without even the luxury of a mattress. No provisions whatever were to be purchased; and, except some Turkish soldiers, nobody was to be seen in the town.

Perceiving a solitary Armenian, I called out to him to come in; but being sore afraid he stood like a fool a long way off. When I got close to him, I found that he displayed the

characteristics of an idiot; and beyond informing me that all his family had been killed, that he was quite alone in the world, and that he had been wandering about the mountains and in deserted places, God knows where, for a week, a month, a year, he didn't know how long—I could not get any information whatever from him.

A short time afterwards, a second Armenian walked towards the house in which I was staying; but passing by with furtive glances, he told Hadjee that he dared not stop for fear of the Turks, who had forbidden him to come near me.

Later on, and when the shades of evening darkened the place, he came back. He was a native of Bayazid, he said; and quite calmly, and as a matter of course, of which he did not appear to be the least ashamed, he told me that his wife, his sisters, and all the females of his family, had been abused in his presence by both Turks and Koords.

'How do you know they were Turks?' I asked.

'Because I know them quite well by sight; and one of them was a neighbour of mine, with whom, for a long time, I had a sort of friendship,' he replied.

Learning from this man that there were several Armenians collected from different places and living all together in a house in the town, I determined, accompanied by Hadjee and my Greek interpreter, to go and see them.

Passing through a small courtyard, and opening a door, I entered a room, the aspect of which I cannot, as long as I live, ever forget. Almost without clothes, except such filthy rags, covered with vermin, as they had huddled on their fever-stricken, emaciated, and shivering bodies; without furniture or bedding, without food; and with a deportment so fearful, and unnaturally attentive to every sound, as to resemble people deprived of their sense and reason, a large number of Armenians of both sexes were wallowing in a worse and more degraded condition than pigs in a sty.

As soon as I came in, the women, staring at me with every appearance of insanity, huddled together like wild animals. They did not weep, but they sobbed and trembled more violently than people with the ague.

Some words from Hadjee assured and comforted them; and they returned to the places where they had been sitting when I came in.

Two very young boys, the eldest not more than five years old, came up to me; and the latter said something.

Taking hold of his hand, I asked the meaning of his words. He only wants to know, they said, if you will bring him back his "little mother." These forlorn little men were found wandering about and calling for their mother; but nobody knew whom their parents were, nor what had become of them.

Honest Hadjee burst into tears; and I am not ashamed to confess that I felt a dryness in my throat which for a few moments prevented articulation.

The wife of the man under whose guidance

I was brought face to face with this sickening scene, confessed to me with her own lips, in the presence of my interpreter and several other people, that she and her married sister had both been publicly violated before their husbands' eyes; and that another sister, only sixteen years of age and not yet married, had been outraged in a similar manner.

This girl, notwithstanding her forlorn condition and the dirt and rags disfiguring her, was very handsome, and of a type altogether Armenian. Her long hair, in a single plait, hung down her back, her well-moulded figure was extremely graceful and of commanding height; but her large and tearful black eyes and her gentle expression, perhaps added to the deep sympathy with which I listened to her shame.

"It is not the wish of God, nor even of the devil," said her mother, "that such turpitudes as have happened in Alishkird should take place. The English, they say, are a good people; when you go home again, tell them what you have seen."

Such, in the foregoing pages, I have—to the best of my ability, and without partiality, favour, or affection — endeavoured to do.

THE END.

BILLING AND SONS, PRINTERS AND ELECTROTYPERS, GUILDFORD.